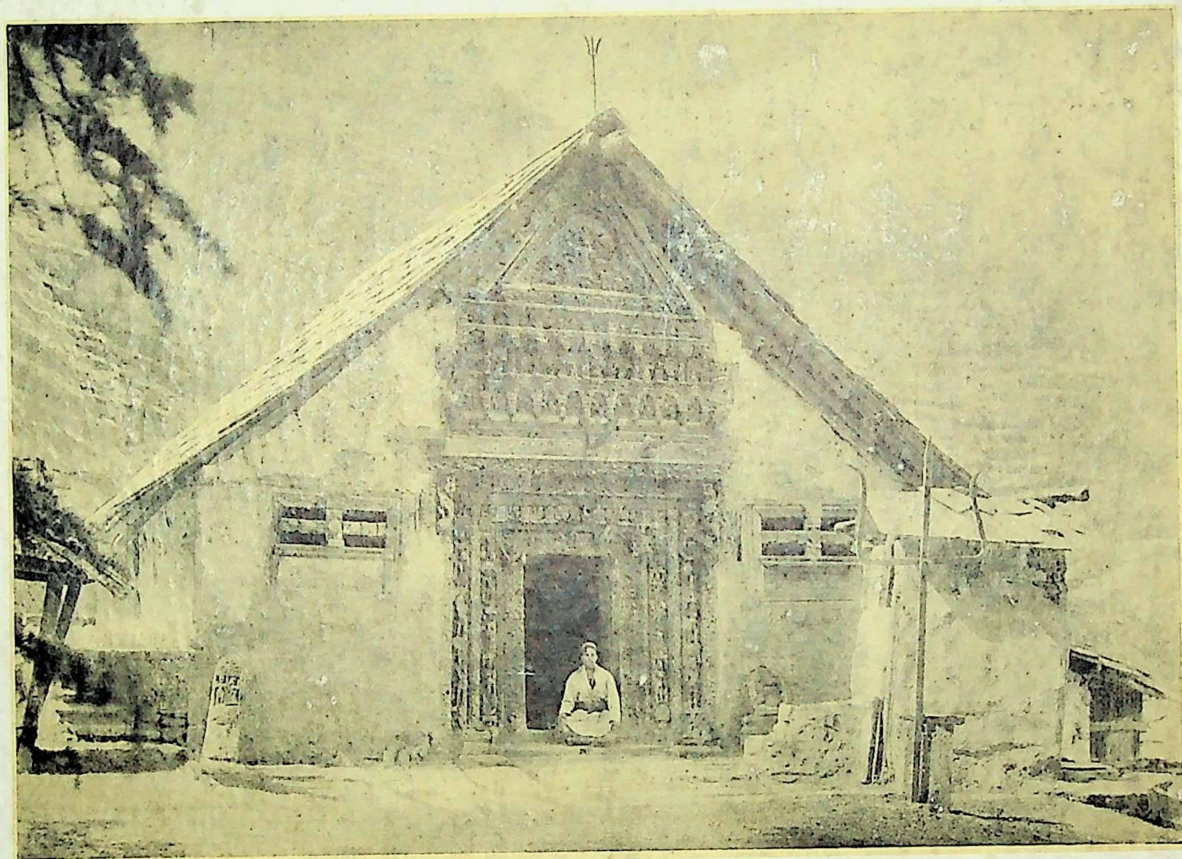
THE EARLY WOODEN TEMPLES OF CHAMBA



HERMANN GOETZ


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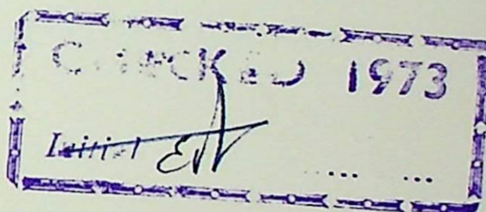
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THE EARLY WOODEN TEMPLES OF CHAMBA

BY

HERMANN GOETZ

WITH 16 PLATES, 12 TEXT ILLUSTRATIONS AND 1 MAP





LEIDEN
E. J. BRILL
1955

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पुस्तक सं. 726.14
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तिथि 56,394
गुरुकुल पुस्तकालय कांगड़ी

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CONTENTS

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATES

TEXT ILLUSTRATIONS

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FOREWORD

The magnificent stone temples of Kashmir which once adorned the banks of the Vitastā, as far as they still exist, now present the sad spectacle of desolate ruins. The valley of the Ravi, on the contrary, which until 1948 constituted the ancient hill State of Chamba, owing to its more sheltered situation, still contains numerous well preserved temples, some unique brass images of excellent workmanship and an incredible number of Sanskrit inscriptions on rocks, stone slabs and copper-plates. In the years 1902-1908 it was my good fortune to explore this treasure-house of historical relics. In 1911 the Government of India authorized me to publish my *Antiquities of Chamba State,* Part I, in which fifty inscriptions of the pre-Muhammadan period were edited. It was my intention to bring out another volume on the inscriptions of the Muslim period and to devote a third volume to the ancient temples. But my appointment in Leiden and subsequent resignation from the Archaeological Survey of India in 1914 rendered it impossible for me to carry out the proposed scheme.

Thanks to the co-operation of the Director General of Archaeology a suitable arrangement was made for the further publication of the antiquarian materials collected in Chamba though not in as sumptuous a shape as was first envisaged. The copper-plate inscriptions of the Muslim period are being edited in the form of a Memoir by Dr. B. Ch. Chhabra, Deputy Director General of Archaeology, who as a Government Epigraphist and Editor of *Epigraphia Indica* has amply shown his competence in Indian epigraphy.

The Kern Institute undertook to publish the present monograph on the three earliest temples of Chamba, remarkable as rare examples of timber architecture and on account of their sculptural decoration. These three sanctuaries all pertain to the worship of the Goddess under various names. This is not a matter of accident. Devī is indeed the deity most widely worshipped by the rural population of the Panjab Himalaya. At Brahmor, the ancient capital, she is called Lakshaṇā Devī, but her image pictures her in the familiar shape of Pārvatī Mahishamardinī, i.e. the Victress of the Buffalo-demon. The second temple at Chatrarhi, a village halfway between the town of Chamba and Brahmor is dedicated to Śakti Devī. This name designates her as the personification of divine power. The third temple belongs to Chamba-Lahul, a lonely tract of the upper Chandrabhaga valley where Hinduism and Lamaism meet. The goddess residing in the temple is worshipped by the Hindus as Kālī and by the Tibetans ar rDorje phagmo (Sanskrit Vajravā-

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rāhī), but she is usually indicated by the name of Markula Devī after the neighbouring village. It is surprising to find in this remote place a sanctuary surpassing even the two temples of the Ravi valley by the beauty and variety of its woodcarved decoration. These three ancient temples have marvellously withstood the rigours of the climate and the even greater perils of human vandalism, but they bear evident traces of reconstruction and partial renovation.

The brass statues of Lakshaṇā and Śakti, on account of their workmanship and size, are no less remarkable than the edifices in which they are enshrined. Both bear inscriptions stating that Mahārāja Meruvarman caused them to be made by the workman Gugga. Two more brass images found at Brahmor, representing Gaṇeśa and Nandin the vehicle of Śiva, were dedicated by the same king and fashioned by the same craftsman, as appears from the inscriptions incised on their pedestals. The epigraphs of Meruvarman are not dated but on account of palaeographical evidence may be ascribed to the eighth century A.D.

Large images, both Brahmanical and Buddhist, of gold, silver and other metals must once have existed all over India, but such objects were the first to attract the cupidity of iconoclasts. None of them has survived and this imparts a unique interest to the idols of Gugga which up to the present day are worshipped in the Ravi valley.

Dr. Hermann Goetz, the author of this monograph, has been closely associated with the Kern Institute from the time when he was attached to it as a Conservator and did excellent work in the editing of the Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology. After proceeding to India in the autumn of 1936, he was for many years in charge of the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery, of which he has made a model institution. At present he is Curator of the National Gallery of Modern Art at New Delhi. During an uninterrupted stay of eighteen years in India he has availed himself of every opportunity to study the ancient monuments of that country both in the plains and in Kashmir, Chamba and the other Hill States of the Western Himalaya. The results of his investigations have been laid down in numerous scholarly papers.

In the present volume he has not only described the ancient temples and images of Chamba from an aesthetic and iconographical point of view. But he has also traced their relations to the medieval art of India and unravelled the problems presented by the *Vaṁśāvalī* of the Rajas of Chamba in connection with our knowledge of contemporaneous Indian history. The sources of this knowledge are lamentably restricted and uncertain. Dr. Goetz will be the first to admit that his conclusions are therefore bound to be largely conjectural. But his historical reconstructions are ingenious and based on all evidence available.

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The photographs reproduced in this volume were mostly taken under my direction in the course of my frequent tours in Chamba in 1902-1908. It is with profound gratitude that I remember His Highness Sir Bhuri Singh, to whom my *Antiquities of Chamba State* was dedicated. His enlightened interest in my work and never failing assistance greatly facilitated my researches. The Museum founded at Chamba the 14th September 1908 under his auspices perpetuates his name.

The members of my staff who accompanied me on my wanderings in Chamba still live in my grateful memory. They never complained of the hardships experienced on many a stiff march along primitive mountain paths and in uncongenial surroundings. My photographer Ghulam Nabi of Lahore in particular deserves to be mentioned. He had often to do his work under trying conditions, as in the temple of Markula, but his resourcefulness proved always adequate to his task.

I wish to express my indebtedness to the Director General of Archaeology for permitting us to publish the photographs taken by his Department, including the two reproduced in plates IV and V, which were recently taken by his Office. They do full justice to the aesthetic qualities of the figures of Lakshaṇā Devī and Śakti Devī here reproduced. The view of the pitoresque façade of the temple of Lakshaṇā (Plate II) I owe to the friendship of my former colleague Mr. A. H. Longhurst. The twelve text illustrations are line-drawings supplied by Dr. Goetz and mostly prepared from his own photographs. Our special thanks are due to Mrs Kuenen-Wicksteed and to Dr. P. H. Pott, Curator of the Leiden Museum of Ethnology, for their welcome assistance in making this work ready for the Press. The editorial work has greatly benefited by the advice of the Manager and Assistant Manager of Messrs E. J. Brill. For valuable information regarding the musical instruments pictured in some of the panels of the Markula Devī temple we are indebted to Dr. A. A. Bake, Reader in Sanskrit in the University of London.

The present work on the Early Temples of Chamba is intended to initiate a series of monographs on various subjects relating to the archaeology and art of India proper and Greater India. An enormous number of ancient monuments still remain to be adequately described and illustrated, not to speak of the treasures of art and history still buried in the numberless ancient sites scattered all over the subcontinent. The prevailing interest in prehistoric explorations should not make us forget how many problems of the historical period still await solution.

J. Ph. Vogel

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PREFACE

The monuments discussed in this book were explored more than half a century ago by Professor J. Ph. Vogel, at that time Superintendent of the Northern (Panjab) Circle of the Archaeological Survey of India. Dr. Vogel realized their great importance for Indian archaeology and mentioned them in his *Annual Progress Reports,* the *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey for 1902-'3,* the *Chamba State Gazetteer,* his *Catalogue of the Bhuri Singh Museum,* and finally in the first volume of his *Antiquities of Chamba State Inscriptions of the Pre-Muhammadan Period.* Unfortunately unfavourable circumstances prevented the second volume from being published.

Thus the early temples and other ancient monuments of Chamba State did not receive the public attention which they deserved. In those years the foundations of a scientific history of India had just been laid, and archaeological evidence was beginning to accumulate. The study of Asiatic art as a whole was still in its infant shoes, and modern ethnological and art critical methods had not yet been developed. There was as yet no background to show up the key position occupied by Dr. Vogel's discoveries in the reconstruction of the period to which they belong. This may be summarized in the following points. Firstly Chamba represents one of the few comparatively undisturbed areas where we can follow the course of political and cultural events, with very few interruptions, from the golden age of the Guptas through the middle ages and the Muslim conquest to Mughal rule and our own times. Secondly for this reason we are able to obtain some most revealing glimpses into the otherwise almost unknown barbarian frontier civilizations imported by the Hūna-Gurjara invasions. Thirdly, this area has bequeathed to us practically unique remnants of later Gupta and Kashmiri art, otherwise almost lost. Finally we have an opportunity of witnessing the death of medieval Hindu art and the birth of the Rajput art which flourished in Mughal and Sikh times.

When in 1936 I came first to India, Dr. Vogel suggested me to resume the work on the *Antiquities of Chamba State* where he had been compelled to abandon it. After a first informal visit to Chamba in the early summer of 1937 an agreement was reached in 1938 between the State authorities and Rao Bahadur K. N. Dikshit, Director General of Archaeology in India, entrusting Dr. B. Ch. Chhabra with the epigraphical side, and myself with the historical and archaeological side

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of the task. I spent most of the summer of 1939, from April to August, in Chamba, visiting Chamba Town, Khajiar, Udaipur, Rajnagar, Saho, Mehla, Chatrarhi and Brahmor. A good part of this time was spent merely in searching for the clues to classify and date monuments the history and art-historical position of which was shrouded in utter obscurity. The result of these investigations was a draft manuscript more or less on the lines of the previous volumes of the Imperial Series, dealing with the monuments not yet described by Dr. Vogel, and elaborating their historical background already published in his and Dr. J. Hutchison's many monographs, later collected in the *History of the Punjab Hill States.* As I penetrated deeper into the subject, this draft was recast into an elaborate political and art history of Chamba and the neighbouring Hill States.

The second World War and its aftermath of economic difficulties, social unrest and political changes made the publication of the book impossible, notwithstanding the sincere efforts of Rao Bahadur K. N. Dikshit and of Dr. R. E. Mortimer Wheeler, his successor as Director General of Archaeology. It became increasingly clear that the book had no chance of being printed in its originally envisaged form. In consequence it was agreed to abandon the original scheme and to break up the manuscript.

This unfortunate delay and repeated recasting of the text had also their beneficial side. For they permitted the collection of much additional documentation. The early Chamba monuments first seemed to be entirely without context in spite of the inscriptions of Meruvarman, and his inclusion in the Chamba *Vaṁśāvalī.* These early inscriptions do not lead us very far, and every historian knows that, though generally he can accept the bare facts mentioned in the *Vaṁśāvalīs,* he can trust neither their arrangement nor their interpretation. Even the most superficial analysis of the Chamba *Vaṁśāvalī* reveals that it is an artificial reconstruction of the 16th-17th centuries. The only way to proceed was an attempt to frame a comprehensive picture of the historical situation in the past, and then to see how the facts mentioned in the *Vaṁśāvalī* and in the inscriptions would fit in.

The most essential, but complicated question arose from the fact that the early Chamba temples belong to a time still very near to the Hūna-Gurjara invasion. And the deeper I delved into the subject, the more it became evident that they were in some way connected with this delicate and controversal problem. I believe that scientific honesty demands to face it. We cannot first acknowledge the fact of this immense barbarian avalanche, and then behave as if it had spent its strength without leaving any vestiges behind. Nor can we hide behind such terms as "local tradition" or "folk art" when strange and apparently un-Indian features appear in the ethnographic picture of the Western Himalaya. Such features always

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are the sediment of great historical events in the past. Comparative ethnology and art history have replies to such problems. I have endeavoured to solve these problems by making use of all evidence available. I believe this solution is much nearer to the truth than the hitherto accepted traditional picture which cannot stand criticism. But I do not pretend that my historical reconstruction is the full truth. Research not only in the archaeology, but even more in the ethnology of the Western Himalaya has been sadly neglected, and equally the investigation of all the nomadic tribes, such as Gūjars, Mers, Rabaris, etc., and derivative castes once connected with these barbarian movements. Such studies are of vital importance in a case where historical records are often deceptive, because they merely tell us what the new ruling classes pretended to be, not what they actually were. The more recent Rajput pretensions of the Marathas, Gorkhas, Manipuri rajas, etc. should caution us, as well as parallel phenomena in connection with the barbarian invasions into ancient Egypt, Babylonia, China and the Roman Empire. If the solutions possible at present are not satisfactory, they can at least be signmarks for further research. It is only more research, fieldwork in the full awareness of the historical implications at issue, fieldwork in ethnology, folk art and archaeology which can bring us nearer to the historical truth.

I have myself tried to undertake as much of such fieldwork as was possible without any official support. In 1947 I paid another visit to Pathankot, Chamba, Taragarh, Basohli, Nurpur, Kangra, Jwalamukhi, Nadaun, Tira-Sujanpur and Baijnath; in 1948 to Kumaon, especially Dvarahat, Katarmal and Jagesvar; in 1950 to Kashmir and Jammu; in 1952 to the Simla hills, Bilaspur, Tira-Sujanpur, Mandi, Kulu, Kangra, Guler and Nurpur; and in 1954 to Nepal. Other research tours were made in Rajasthan and Central India, likewise significant areas for those same problems. I have hitherto been able to work up and to publish only a fraction of the material collected during those tours. But it has helped very much to clarify the problems of Chamba history and archaeology.

The archaeological data especially were easier to interpret when seen in a sufficiently broad perspective. I had often to use very fragmentary evidence, as of innumerable ancient monuments only some stray sculptures or echoes in folk art are left. Yet I believe their systematic survey has permitted me to build up a fairly accurate picture of the early art history of the Himalaya, at least so far as it deals with Hindu art. Details, of course, may need reconsideration. Again I could not help anticipating certain classifications and new terminologies which only in future studies I shall be able to discuss more in detail.

Before concluding these remarks, I wish to thank all those who have helped me in the completion of this book. In view of its long antecedents it is impossible

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to mention all persons who in the course of years have in one way or another added their share now indistinguishably absorbed into a material so often recast. Some of them have already been mentioned. Neither should I forget my wife without whose inexhaustible patient help and co-operation not only this book, but all my other research would never have been possible. But above all I thank sincerely Professor J. Ph. Vogel. He has inspired this book. He has placed at my disposal much material collected during his own research tours, especially detailed notes on Brahmor, Chatrarhi and Marul-Udaipur; the photographs (the negatives of which have partly been lost during the secession of Pakistan) for the plates and for part of the line drawings, not to mention his earlier publications. He has assisted me with valuable hints and not less with sober criticism. He has made the publication of the book possible in the face of endless difficulties. And last but not least, he is actually the first explorer of the monuments here discussed.

New Delhi, the 31st January 1955. H. GOETZ

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REFERENCES

The following abbreviations are used:

A.S.R.: Archaeological Survey of India Reports, by Alexander Gunningham 1871-87, and Archaeological Survey of India Annual Reports, by Sir John Marshall and others from 1902-03.
A.P.R.: Annual Progress Reports, by the Superintendents Archaeological Survey of India.
B.E.F.E.O.: Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient.
Chamba Gaz.: Chamba State Gazetteer (Punjab States Gazetteer. Vol. XXII A) Lahore 1910.
Ep. Ind.: Epigraphia Indica.
Ind. Ant.: Indian Antiquary.
Ind. Cult.: Indian Culture.
Ind. Hist. Qu.: Indian Historical Quarterly.
J.A.S.B.: Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
J. As.: Journal Asiatique.
J.R.A.S.: Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.
J.B.B.R.A.S.: Journal Bombay Branch Royal Asiatic Society.
J. Bihar Res. Soc.: Journal of the Bihar & Orissa Research Society.
J. Bombay Univ.: Journal of the Bombay University.
J. Greater India Soc.: Journal of the Greater India Society.
J. Gujarat Res. Soc: Journal of the Gujarat Research Society.
J. U. P. Hist. Soc.: Journal of the Uttar Pradesh Historical Society.
J. Ind. Hist.: Journal of Indian History.
Proc. Ind. Hist. Congress: Proceedings of the Indian Historical Congress.
Z.D.M.G.: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Though superficially well known today, the Himalayas still are little explored. And yet they offer a highly rewarding field of research. For like all great mountain ranges they have in the course of time offered a refuge to races, cultures, religions and arts which elsewhere are forgotten, wiped out or merged beyond recognition into other social units or later forms of civilization. Many most interesting problems which confront the ethnologist, historian and archaeologist, may await their solution in those valleys. For where gorges, torrents, forests and snowfields place endless difficulties in the path of the traveller, communications are slow and not very intensive; migrations of peoples, therefore, have been slow and conquests ephemeral, cultural influences have come late, and the isolation of valley from valley has facilitated the survival of the peoples and civilizations occupying them.

Of course, the Himalayas are not everywhere the same. But they always share these characteristics. The outer hills (esp. the Siwaliks) rise only slightly above the level of the Indian plains. It is a lovely country, not much cooler, but much more fertile than the plains, for the monsoon hits it with all its strength, enveloping it for two to three months in a mist of clouds and torrential rains, whereas during the rest of the year the springs of the mountain forests and the glaciers of the inner valleys provide a never failing water supply. Rice-fields, gardens, plantain and bamboo groves, palm trees, etc. form a scenery of an opulence vying with the Malabar coast, Java and Bali. But they are the product of hard work, of innumerable irrigation channels winding along the hill sides, and of terrace over terrace held by stone and earth embankments. Wherever these are neglected, or where the debris every year brought down by the mountain streams render their construction impossible as in the Tarai, dense jungle and swamps soon cover the country side, infested by mosquitoes, breeding malaria, harbouring tigers and leopards. In many places this jungle has made the access to the hills difficult and not without danger. The outer ranges form further obstacles. For in most places they are a labyrinth of nullas and gorges, covered with cactus jungle, alternating only here and there with a forest-covered low ridge. Beyond, there are smaller or vaster fertile plains enclosed by hills. But most of this territory again is a mass of

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gorges, sometimes cut into the soft conglomerate or loess hundreds of feet deep, where decaying terraces and crumbling cliffs and hill sides create a wild scenery, not seldom evoking the romance of the mesas and canyons of New Mexico and Arizona. This is the scene of most of the ancient Rajput States, from the Indus down to deep into Nepal. On these hills cut out by the rivers, and on the plateaus squeezed in between the river gorges and the hills there are their castles, fortresses and little towns, whereas all around the slopes are covered with villages in the midst of rice terraces.

Beyond, the next set of mountain ranges rises much higher. Their slopes are covered with deciduous trees, higher up with various pine trees and at last with gigantic deodar cedars; and more than half of the year snow decks the bare rocks and sparse grass of their summits. Here, too, is fertile land. But it is found only in amphitheatres separated by deep, almost impassable gorges. These amphitheatres have been formed by the confluence of the mountain rivers, on terraces into which later on the water has cut a narrower gorge, or on the slopes of debris accumulated by some subsidiary rivulet. Each of these oases of agricultural land gives subsistance to one or two, nay even to some dozen villages. Often they lead an almost isolated life, as they can be reached only by gorges through which the road has to be blasted out of the cliffs, or through valleys where it has to be reconstructed time and again after the devastations of landslides and avalanches; or where it has to pass over high meadows and morasses, thick forest or passes high up in the mountains which the snow keeps closed at least for half of the year. Occasionally wider valleys are formed like the main section of Kulu; and here small kingdoms once developed, exercising a loose control over the surrounding valleys. But the less accessible valleys generally retained a considerable measure of independence, small republics revolting against any interference with their internal affairs, though accepting some allegiance to the nearest power.

Beyond the following mountain ranges the scenery again changes. The high valleys are reached only by the last remnants of the Indian monsoon, while being also exposed to the cold winds and snow storms of Central Asia. Only grass and a very thin, though often beautiful flora cover the bottom of the valleys, and very occasionally some small oasis of arable land can be found. All around them pine forests, cliffs and glaciers can be seen and, beyond, there rise the majectic snow peaks of the inner Himalayan ranges in a pure sky of an incredibly glowing blue, or in a grey mist over which dark shreds of clouds are driven. Villages still are rare and far between. The shepherd competes with the agriculturist, the Tibetan with the Indian, Lamaism with Hinduism. Politically these poor, but grandiose valleys have changed hands time and again, being overrun by the

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horsemen of Central Asia and again colonized by Indian peasants, traders, Rajputs and *sādhus*.

Still further, the Tibetan highlands are reached, the endless bare desert plains with their salt-lakes, separated by low ranges, but from time to time losing themselves in canyons of wild mountains interspersed with unexpected oases: the land of the nomads and caravans, and of the Lama monasteries and small trading towns.

It is in the forest zone that the most interesting problems await the ethnologist, historian and archaeologist, although the other zones are also highly rewarding. In the fertile outer hills, between the Siwaliks and the snow ranges, we find the most numerous vestiges of ancient and of later Hindu civilization, from Kushān and Gupta times up to the flourishing of "Kangra" art in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The innermost zone of barren high valleys has been the theatre of the clash and interaction between Hindu and Tibetan civilization. But it is the intermediate zone of secluded valleys amidst high mountains and deep forests which has sheltered the most interesting remnants of peoples and civilizations which elsewhere are lost or can be traced only in sparse vestiges. Within this zone Chamba is of special importance because in the upper Ravi and the middle Chandrabhaga valleys natural protection has been exceptionally potent. In consequence Chamba has harboured a great number of monuments which shed a revealing light on some of the obscurest and yet most crucial chapters of Indian history and art, amongst them the three temples of Brahmor, Chatrarhi and Markula-Udaipur to the study of which this book is devoted.

Chamba town is easy of access, at least during the summer. For it is not far from Dalhousie, the beautiful hill station on a high shoulder of the Dhaula Dhar, which stands in ample motor connection with Pathankot, the terminus of the broadgauge railway from Delhi via Jullundur (Jālandhar) and Mukherian, or Amritsar, from where the motor roads to Kashmir and Kulu, and the small railway line to Kangra-Nagrotah branch off. Since 1947 another motor road, passing along the Ravi gorge deep below it, connects Dalhousie also with Chamba town, and a beautiful bridle path leads to the same place, through a wonderful deodar forest and over the charming mountain lake of Khajiar with its romantic snake temple. But in olden times both these routes, like a third one via Nurpur, Taragarh and the Chuari Pass, were difficult enough to discourage an invasion, though quite passable in peaceful times. Chamba town, on the junction of the Sal with the Ravi, though a few times occupied by enemy armies, has, on the whole, suffered much less than any of the old towns in the outer hills. But it also shared their culture sufficiently to offer little of exceptional interest.

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But higher up the situation is very different. Churah along the Syuhl river is protected by the passes of Bhalai-Jundh and Pukhri-Dhundh; Brahmor-Trehta on the upper Ravi and its tributary, the Budhal, can be reached only with the greatest difficulty through a series of forbidding gorges between Mehla-Basu and Chatrarhi, or by crossing a high pass from Dharmsala in the Kangra Valley. Other approaches are from Lahul in the half-Tibetan upper Chandrabhaga Valley. But that part of Lahul is, itself, rather difficult of access, and not directly connected with the adjoining Tibetan (Ladakhi) province of Zangskar. Both the roads down from Kyelang, the centre of trade with Kulu, Spiti and Zangskar or up from Kilar in Pangi from where other routes lead to Padar (down the Chandrabhaga),Zangskar or Churah, are very strenuous, and in some parts even extremely dangerous. All around high mountains, especially the Manimahesh massif in the east, the Dhaula Dhar and its extension, the Chattar Dhar and the Pir Pantsal, in the centre, and the Zangskar range in the north, form a forbidding barrier of ice, rocks and forests.

Whereas the narrowness of the Trehta Valley permits of only few settlements, the wide Budhal Valley, in which Brahmor is situated, resembles the most beautiful parts of Switzerland. Its people, the Gaddi shepherds and cowherds, their wooden houses with balconies like Swiss chalets, their milk production complemented by some poor millet fields, vegetable gardens and bee keeping, likewise create an illusion of Switzerland.The neighbourhood of Chatrarhi repeats this setting on a minor scale. At Mirkula-Udaipur, in Chamba-Lahul, the junction of the Maiyar Nala with the Chandrabhaga forms a smaller oasis of similar type.

But amidst this "Swiss" scenery there stand, in all three places, Hindu temples, constructed of heavy beams of the fragrant deodar wood, and erected, as all the evidence proves, in the 7th-8th centuries. The very fact of the existence of wooden temples which, though repaired more than once, still are vestiges of a time twelve to thirteen centuries ago, is amazing enough. They are moreover richly decorated with wooden reliefs, and enshrine brass statues contemporaneous with and hardly less beautiful than the Central Indian art of the Buddhist and Hindu cave temples of Ajanta, Aurangabad, Ellora, etc. forming an invaluable contribution to our knowledge of Indian art. For those Central Indian monuments are generally acknowledged as creations of the Golden Age of Indian art, the Age of the Imperial Guptas and of their successors, the Vākātakas, Chālukyas and Rāshṭrakūṭas.

On a closer analysis the subject proves even more interesting. Since the middle of the 5th century the Gupta Empire had begun to crumble under the impact of a barbarian invasion which temporarily overran it down to Bihar, Malwa and

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Gujarat. Like the Roman Empire, Gupta civilization withstood this invasion of the Huns, Gurjaras and other semi-nomadic tribes for several centuries, but at the price of a progressive militarization and absorption of the barbarians into its own ranks.

But whereas we are comparatively well informed concerning the art of this period in Central India, the Deccan and the South, in northern India we have to scrape together the evidence from stray finds here and there, all that is left after the endless destruction wrought by the wars between the successor dynasties of the Guptas, the invasions of the barbarian leaders Mihiragula and Toramāṇa, the Gurjaras under the semi-barbarian Pratihāras, the Pāla kings from the East, the Rāshṭrakūṭas from the South, later of the Chandellas from Central India, and at last wave after wave of Muslim conquerors from Central Asia. But these stray remnants show that this was one of the most beautiful and most interesting phases of Indian art, when the foundations not only of medieval Hindu, but also of Greater Indian and of Buddhist-Chinese art were laid.

This destruction of all historical and archaeological documentation is worst in the Panjab which had to bear the brunt of all the successive barbarian invasions. But just here in the Panjab we are in face of a set of richly decorated and beautifully preserved wooden temples and their brass images, thanks to the seclusion of the inner Himalayan hills. And these very temples belong to a period which hitherto has been almost a blank in our knowledge of India's past. As we shall see, they present quite a number of most interesting problems.

Yet the temples of Brahmor and Chatrarhi have been known for more than a hundred years, as Sir Alexander Cunningham had visited them as far back as 1839 [1]. All of them were explored fifty years ago by Dr. J. Ph. Vogel. Their inscriptions have been published in his *Antiquities of Chamba State,* (Calcutta 1911); the historical results, derived from the Chamba and Kulu *Vamśāvalīs* (genealogies) and other sources have been incorporated into J. Hutchison and J. Ph. Vogel, *History of the Panjab Hill States* (Lahore 1933), and other antiquities and works of art have been described in Dr. Vogel's *Catalogue of the Bhuri Singh Museum* (Calcutta 1909). It is, therefore, a pity that the second volume of the *Antiquities* never appeared, notwithstanding so many efforts, and that such important temples never found the attention which they deserve.

1 A. Cunningham, *A.S.R.,* XXI, p. 109, pl. XXVIII.

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CHAPTER II

THE BRAHMAPURA KINGDOM AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHAMBA STATE

Before giving a description of these wooden temples, it will be desirable to analyze their historical setting. No monument can be really understood except in the context of its historical background. And this problem is of special importance in the present case where the monuments appear to be suspended in a sort of vacuum, though even so we know much more about them than about many splendid temples in other parts of India like the Telī-kā-Mandir at Gwalior and the temple of Bhitargaon, the date and circumstances of which are a matter of pure speculation.

The Brahmor and Chatrarhi temples still possess their original images, and these idols bear inscriptions of a raja Meruvarman who is mentioned in the Chamba *Vaṁśāvalī* as one of the earliest and foremost rulers of the Varman dynasty of that once not unimportant Panjab hill state. It is mainly on this evidence that Dr. Vogel has attributed both Meruvarman and the sanctuaries erected by him to the two last decades of the 7th century. Unfortunately the short inscriptions supply very few facts, partly contradicted by the traditions collected in the *Vaṁśāvalī*.

This state chronicle [1] was composed as late as the end of the 16th century by Paṇḍit Ramāpati, son of Surānanda Śarma and chief minister of king Balabhadra-varman (1589-1642). It is based on an earlier *Vaṁśāvalī* in the stricter sense of the word, i.e. a pedigree of the royal house, and on various traditions then still alive, especially in the leading temples. On the whole, the *vaṁśāvalīs* [2] prove amazingly reliable, so far as the mere handing down of events is concerned. But they have to be accepted with considerable reservations. As products of an age of a very low standard of literacy they are utterly unscientific and uncritical; and events, though correctly mentioned, often enough are transposed into the milieu and outlook of very different later times; thus, political events of all-Indian importance are dragged down to the level of the ordinary local wars and feuds, or the names of ancient tribes and towns are replaced by those of a later period.

1 J. Ph. Vogel, *Antiquities of Chamba State,* p. 78 ff.; H. Goetz, *J. Ind. Hist.*, XXX, p. 293 ff.
2 L. P. Tessitori, *J.A.S.B.* XV, Letters, p. 5 ff., also J. Ph. Vogel, *Antiquities,* p. 78, 80.

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As court products they tend to suppress whatever is detrimental to the prestige of the dynasty for which they have been composed, so that reigns full of defeats and disasters are simply registered as uneventful. Victories and successes, of course, are mentioned; but also victories gained by those princes merely as vassals in the armies of mightier rulers, are represented as independent achievements [3]. Finally all *vaṁśāvalīs* start with a mythical pedigree culled from the great epics and the Purāṇas, in order to prove the divine origin of the ruling house. Add to this the fact that regnal years are hardly mentioned, and that parallel reigns are treated as one subsequent to the other, and it is evident that such *vaṁśāvalīs* can be used only if they are constantly counterchecked with the help of other *vaṁśāvalīs,* inscriptions, and in the light of the general background of the times.

Before analyzing the inscriptions of Meruvarman and the early Chamba traditions, therefore, we must first survey the general situation in the Panjab during those centuries. For the Panjab then had no stable population. When Alexander the Great invaded it in 327-26 B.C., he met a great number of small tribal kingdoms and republics. Soon after his death all these small states were incorporated into the gigantic Maurya Empire and placed under the control of a viceroy residing at Taxila. However, about 185 B.C. the empire disintegrated, and north-western India was successively overrun by the Bactrian Greeks, the Indo-Parthians and the Indo-Scythians, at last becoming an integral part of the Kushān Empire (ca. 70-250). During these chaotic times many tribes of the Panjab were pushed towards the east, some, like the Malloi (Mālavas) [4] as far as Central India. Of these various peoples very little is known. The geographical lists in the *Mahābhārata,* the *Purāṇas* and other sacred books of the Hindus merely provide us with names. Many tribes evidently were Indians of the utmost West, but the Bāhlikas [5], Śakas, Kushānas (the majority of the ruling class), Tukhāras and Parthians were Iranians, and others like the Kushāna kings and the Muruṇḍas seem to have been of White Hun or Turkish stock, though of half-Iranian culture [6]. The principal ethnic group in the Himalaya seems to have been the Mongoloid Khaśas, whose settlements extended from eastern Turkistan (Kashgar) over Kashmir to Nepal and Assam (Khāśis) [7]. To them also the Audumbaras [8] and the Kunin-

3 These abuses, well known from modern war publicity, are common also in ancient Indian inscriptions.

4 A. Banerji Sastri, *J. Bihar Res. Soc.* XXIII, p. 28 ff.; S. B. Chaudhuri, *Ind. Hist. Qu.,* XXIV, p. 171 ff.; B. Ch. Law, *J. U. P. Hist. Soc.* VII, pt. 2, p. 25 ff.

5 Bactrians: but also a mere variant of *Bāhīkas* = aliens.

6 P. C. Bagchi, *J. Greater India Soc.* X, p. 107 ff.

7 G. A. Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India,* vol. IX, pt. 4; J. C. Powell-Price, *J. U. P. Hist. Soc.* IV, pt. 2, p. 5 ff.

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das (Kulindas)[9] probably belonged who in these centuries formed not unimportant local republics in the area of the Ravi, Beas and Sutlej. Later on part of the Kunindas seems to have moved to Kumaon, whereas on the Sutlej we find the Vṛishṇis, on the Beas still the Audumbaras and Kapisthalas, on the Ravi the Kathas and Dārvas, on the Chenab also Dārvas, Khaśas and Rājanyas.

Most of the time these tribes were vassals of the Kushāns. But on the decline of the Imperial Kushānas the Kunindas formed an alliance with the Yaudheyas and Ārjunāyanas[10] of the Panjab and made themselves independent. Soon, however, they reverted to the yoke of the Sasano-Kushān kings of Afghanistan, and then came under that of the Imperial Guptas. First Samudragupta (328-376) established his power over the eastern Panjab up to Sialkot, including Kumaon and the Himalayan republics, and then the great Chandragupta II Vikramāditya (378-414) conquered the whole area up to the Indus and overawed the Sasano-Kushāns.

During the last years of Kumāragupta (ca. 445-55), however, a Druggu (Tunguse = T'u-ku-hun) chieftain, Mihiragula I (Mu-ri-kan = Mu-li-yen)[11], invaded Khotan, Kashmir and Gandhāra (Swat Valley) and attacked the Gupta Empire. As he cannot be identical with the well known Ephthalite king Mihiragula, son of Toramāṇa, these Tunguse probably were the same as the Pushyamitras who according to Indian sources fell on the Gupta Empire before, and then in company with the White Huns. Mihiragula I later on returned to his home country. Those Tunguse who had joined the White Huns seem to have settled at last in Marwar and Gujarat[12]. Mihiragula I was followed by the Ephthalites, a semi-Iranian people, who for some time had been vassals of the Central Asian Huns, and therefore were also called "White Huns"[13]. By 427 they had established

[8] J. Ch. Ghosh, *Ind. Culture* I, p. 75 ff.; J. Przyluski, *J. As.* 1926, p. 1 ff.; Hutchison-Vogel, *History of the Panjab Hill States,* Lahore 1933, I, p. 215 f.

[9] Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* I, p. 216 f.

[10] A. S. Altekar, *J. U. P. Hist. Soc.* XVI, pt. 2, p 52 ff., P. L. Gupta, *J. U. P. Hist. Soc.* XXIII, p. 169 ff.

[11] Yang Hsien-yi, *Oriental Art,* I, no. 4, p. 166 ff. The references quoted from the *Pei shih* and *Sung shu* prove that he invaded Kashmir soon after 445, i.e. ca. 446-452.

[12] The 6th century Gupta sculptures from Devni Mori, Samlaji district, Idar (H. Goetz, *J. Gujarat Res. Soc.* XIV, no. 1, p. 1 ff.) and the Jain bronzes of the 7th-8th centuries recently discovered at Akota and Vasantgarh reveal a pronounced Mongol type which even today can be traced in some castes; two Ambikā images represent the goddess on a typical nomadic pony (See U. P. Shah, in B. Subbarao, *Baroda through the Ages,* Baroda 1953, p. 97 ff.). This Mongol type is found also in sculptures up to Jaisalmer between the 7th and 9th centuries.

[13] W. M. Mc Govern, *The Early Empires of Central Asia,* Chapel Hill 1939; R. Ghirshman, *Les Chionites-Hephthalites,* Cairo 1949; Sir John Marshall, *Taxila,* Cambridge, 1951, I, p. 76 ff.; R. N. Dandekar, *History of the Guptas,* Poona 1941.

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an empire in Turkistan, and bands of them soon joined the Pushyamitras. About 470 at last they likewise invaded the Gupta Empire and defeated Skandagupta (ca. 455-76) who, however, at last succeeded in beating them off. His death was followed by a succession of weak princes on the imperial throne. The empire broke up, and the Ephthalite viceroys Toramāṇa and Mihiragula II overran northern India up to Pāṭaliputra (Patna in Bihar), Malwa and Gujarat. Again the Indians succeeded in stemming this avalanche about 527, but apparently at the price of tremendous sacrifices. The now all-powerful military governors of the provinces became independent, and soon the last puppet emperors were superseded by several dynasties of military rulers, all of whom struggled for the defence of India against the barbarians. First about 527 Yaśodharman of Malwa [14] defeated the Ephthalites who retired to Kashmir. And even from there he expelled them temporarily. Ultimately the nucleus of the Ephthalites seems to have been absorbed into the Turkish ruling class of Afghanistan, the Turkī-Shāhīs [15]. But whole tribes were apparently settled in the interior of India, and later merged into the various Rajput clans.

But at the very time that the Ephthalites disappeared from the scene, the Gurjaras appeared upon it. They seem to have been dragged into India by the White Hun invasion. In order to weaken the Ephthalites, the Indian statesmen apparently had played them out against their former leaders in encouraging them to set up their own principalities [16]. But soon they became no less a nuisance and danger to the Indian kingdoms than the Ephthalites. The Pushyabhūtis of Thanesar, the Maukharis of Kanauj, the later Guptas of Malwa, and the Maitrakas of Valabhi (Saurāshṭra) were kept busy holding them in check. Slowly they formed a series of states [17] along the Thar desert, the Takka kingdom in the Panjab west of the Ravi, the Pratihāra kingdom of Mandor and Bhinmal in Marwar (Jodhpur), that of Broach in Gujarat [18], and another at Nasik [19] in northern Mahārāshṭra. Yet, these states do not yet exhaust the expansion of the Gurjaras. For other clans, ancestors of the Kachhwaha and Tomar Rajputs, must have settled in the Jaipur-Gwalior area, and, as we shall see, also in the Panjab Himalaya. Towards the end of the 8th century the Pratihāras of Avanti, a branch of the Bhinmal dynasty, began to absorb all other Gurjara kingdoms and to expand their empire over the whole of northern India, from the borders of Bihar to the Ravi in the Panjab, to

14 J. F. Fleet, *Gupta Inscriptions*, Calcutta 1888; A. F. R. Hoernle, *J.R.A.S.* 1909, p. 89 ff.
15 The Turks crushed the Ephthalites ca. 565, in alliance with the Sasanian Khusrau Anushirwān.
16 S. B. Chaudhuri, *Ind. Hist. Qu.* XXVI, no. 2, p. 118 ff.
17 G. A. Grierson, *op. cit.*
18 V. B. Mishra, *Annals Bhandarkar Or. Res. Inst.* XXXI, p. 250 ff.
19 M. S. Vats and D. B. Diskalkar, *Ep. Ind.* XXV, p. 225 ff.

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the Mahi in Gujarat and over Saurāshṭra. Henceforward nothing more was heard of a Gurjara upper class, because it became merged into the Rajputs [20]. Only its most backward nomadic brethren have preserved their identity, the Gūjars who today are found in the Northwest Frontier Province, the western Himalaya, the Panjab, Uttar Pradesh (United Provinces), Rajasthan, Malwa, Gujarat and Saurāshṭra [21].

As already mentioned, the military dynasties which had succeeded the Imperial Guptas, kept also the Gurjaras outside the heart of Hindu civilization. Prabhākaravardhana and later Harshavardhana of Thanesar [22] and Īśvaravarman of Kanauj inflicted severe defeats on the Huns, whereas Īśānavarman Maukhari overcame the Śūlikas "who had an army of countless galloping horses", some time in the second half of the 6th century, and his successor Śarvavarman "had thrown aloft in battle the troops of the Hūṇas" [23]. It is under these circumstances not easy to define the exact western frontier line between Indians and barbarians. From the Nirmand [24], copperplate grant of Mahārāja Mahāsāmanta Samudrasena, as well as from excellent late Gupta sculptures found at Agroha near Hissar [25], Kapalmochan and Pinjaur [26], we may conclude that Indian rule extended up to the Sutlej, perhaps even as far as the upper Beas Valley. The empire of the great Harshavardhana of Thanesar (606-647/8) extended up to the Ravi [27]. But those western territories, i.e. the kingdoms of Jālandhara (Trigarta-Kangra in the Beas Valley), Brahmapura and Śatadru (on the Sutlej) were merely vassals acknowledging his suzerainty. Kulūta (Kulu) seems to have been under his direct control; but the matter is not quite clear. What happened during the chaotic years subsequent to Harshavardhana's death, is not known. But when about 730 Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa of Kashmir attacked Yaśovarman of Kanauj (ca. 725-52), he had to

20 D. R. Bhandarkar, *Ind. Ant.* XL, p. 7 ff., Bhupendranath Dutta, *J. Bihar & Orissa Res. Soc.* XXVII, p. 34 ff.; O. R. Ehrenfels, *Mother Right in India,* Hyderabad-Bombay 1941; Nihar-Ranjan Ray, *Ind. Hist. Qu.* IV, p. 740 ff.

21 D. Ibbetson, E. D. Maclagan and H. A. Rose, *A Glossary of Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and N. W. Frontier Province,* vol. II, Lahore 1911; W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh,* Calcutta 1896; G. H. Desai, *A Glossary of Tribes and Races in the Baroda State,* Baroda 1912. The Jāts, Mers, and various other clans seem to go back to the same origins.

22 R. C. Majumdar, *J. Bihar & Orissa Res. Soc.* IX, p. 311 ff.; N. Ray, *Ind. Hist. Qu.,* Dec. 1927; R. K. Mookerji, *Harsha,* London-Calcutta 1926; R. S. Tripathi, *History of Kanauj,* Benares 1937.

23 E. A. Pires, *The Maukharis,* Madras 1934; R. S. Tripathi, *History of Kanauj,* Benares 1937; D. C. Sircar, *J.A.S.B.* XI, Letters, no. 2, p. 69 ff.

24 J. F. Fleet, *op. cit.* p. 286.

25 Now in the East Punjab Museum.

26 A. Cunningham, A. S. R. XIV, p. 70 and 75.

27 R. S. Tripathi, *J. Bihar & Orissa Res. Soc.* XVIII, p. 296 ff.

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fight for three years until he could advance on the latter's capital [28]. This seems to show that also Yaśovarman's empire had extended far to the west, probably likewise up to the Ravi. After his defeat in 733 Yaśovarman became Lalitāditya's vassal, but seems to have acted as his Indian viceroy, when in 747 the invasion of the Tibetan king Khri-lde-btsug-brtan-mes-ᶜag-tshoms (705-55) called the king of Kashmir home and to Central Asia. Archaeological evidence makes it appear probable that Yaśovarman and his successors continued to rule over the eastern Panjab until ca. 770.

The kings of the Āyudha dynasty of Kanauj [29], and later the Pratihāras seem to have maintained the same frontier line. Dharmapāla (ca. 770-815) and Devapāla (ca. 815-854) of Bengal advanced deep into the western Himalaya, Kumaon (Kedarnath and Gokarna) and probably even further west [30]. Thus, when Chakrāyudha was installed at Kanauj, he was acknowledged also by a great number of tribes in the Panjab [31], including the Kīras in the western Himalaya. According to the Pehoa (Karnal district) inscription (A.D. 862), Mihira Bhoja I Pratihāra (836-85) controlled all the provinces up to the Ravi [32]. Archaeological evidence corroborates these conclusions. Late Gupta architecture and stray sculptures (7th-early 8th centuries) can be traced in the Simla States, Kulu, Kangra, Chamba, even at Asarur [33] (the Gurjara capital of Takkadeśa) west of the Ravi, but not beyond. The original Sandhyā Devī temple of Jagatsukh in Kulu belongs to a style group which we have to associate with the Kanauj of the Āyudha dynasty, and Pāla bronzes have been found both in Kulu and at Chatrarhi in Chamba.

From all these facts we can conclude that despite periodical barbarian invasions the eastern Panjab up to the Ravi, including Kangra and Kulu, the southern and eastern borderlands of Chamba, belonged to the Kanauj (-Thanesar) empire, whether under Yaśodharman, the Maukharis, Pushyabhūtis, Yaśovarman, the Āyudhas or Pratihāras. However, it should be noted that in none of these later documents any of the ancient tribes of the eastern Panjab Himalaya are mentioned any more. That they cannot have completely disappeared, is evident from the fact

28 H. Goetz, *J.B.B.R.A.S.* XXVII, pt. 1, p. 43 ff. — *Rājataraṅgiṇī,* IV, p. 126 ff.

29 R. S. Tripathi, *History of Kanauj.* Benares 1937.

30 Rajendralal Mitra, *J.A.S.B.* XLVII, pt. 1, p. 384 ff.; J. C. Powell-Price, *op. cit.* B. C. Law, *Some Kshatriya Tribes of Ancient India,* Calcutta 1924 (defeat of Kāmbojas); E. T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Districts of the N. W. Prov.* Allahabad 1884, II, p. 486.

31 Rajendralal Mitra, *op. cit.* Tripathi, *op. cit.*

32 Cp. G. Bühler, *Ep. Ind.* I, p. 184. Pehoa = Pṛithūdaka is in the Karnal District, but one of the contributing parties, subjects of Bhoja, was the inhabitants of Śāraṅkadika = Shārakpur in Lahore Dt. See also the Sirsa inscription of Bhoja's reign (D. R. Sahni, *Ep. Ind.* XXI, p. 293).

33 A. Cunningham, *A. S. R.,* II, p. 260.

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that the Khaśas and Kunindas (Kanets) exist even today [34]. But in later centuries they were reduced to serfs, ruled over and exploited by a new ruling class of Rāṇās and Ṭhākurs, claiming to be also kshatriyas [35]. It is true, the Ṭhākurs were latecomers, mainly refugees immigrating after the defeat of Pṛithvi Rāj III Chauhān by the Muslims in 1192. But the Rāṇās are a much older social class, though of unknown origin, as there is no reliable evidence of their Rajput rank before the 10th century. In part of the mountains at least, however, Gurjaras must have settled.

For the Western Pahāṛī dialect which now is spoken in Bhadrawāh, Padar and Pangi on the Chandrabhaga (Chenab) in Chamba, Kulu, Mandi, Suket, most of Bilaspur and in the former Simla States, lower Bashahr, Sirmur and Jaunsar-Bawar in Kumaon (up to some miles west of Mussoorie) differs but slightly from Gūjarī, the language of the Gūjars, the descendants of the ancient Gurjaras [36]. Both the Bharata Nāṭyaśāstra and Varāhamihira observe that the Khaśas adopted the "Bahlika" language which, in this case, can mean only Gūjarī, as the Gurjaras had come from Central Asia, and as there are no vestiges of any other language from the Bahlika country, Balkh. But as all such impositions of a new language in the course of history were the result of colonization or conquest (e.g. Latin in Spain and France, Arabic in North Africa, French in Canada, Dutch in South Africa, English in Canada, Australia and India), the introduction of a Gūjarī dialect like Western Pahāṛī can be understood only as the result of a Gurjara conquest or occupation.

In the same area — and, to some degree, also in the adjoining districts to the east and west — a very characteristic type of costume predominates which elsewhere is not known in India except with some of the Gūjars [37], nor in the adjoining Tibetan highlands [38], but which has affinities with eastern Afghanistan, the Pamir region, and even with sporadic ethnographic remnants farther west. The sole exception in this respect is the Brahmor area; but even there the same costume must originally have been worn, as the present population, the Gaddīs, have a tradition that they had immigrated from the plains not very long before

34 Ibbetson, etc., *Glossary*; *Punjab States Gazetteers*; 1904-1910.

35 *Chamba State Gazetteer,* Lahore 1910; Vogel, *Antiquities*; J. Hutchison and Vogel, *op. cit.*, vol. I, chapter 1.

36 G. A. Grierson, *op. cit.*

37 Observed already by Ibbetson, *Glossary* vol. II, p. 460. See also *Chamba State Gaz.*, Lahore 1910, p. 205 ff., and below.

38 Some parts of the female costume of Kulu are similar, especially the skirt, but the headdress not at all.

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the Muslim conquest of northern India, i.e. probably about 1000 [39]. Likewise, the archaeological monuments both of western Chamba (Churah and Pangi) and of Kulu show non-Indian features which point to Central Asian sources, distantly related to, yet different from the Iranian tradition [40]. The anthropological evidence, unfortunately, is less satisfactory, as at present the population in most areas is very mixed. However, even in this respect in Bhadrawah, Churah, Pangi, Kulu and western Kumaon an ethnic strain related to eastern Iran and the Pamir Hindukush region (Galchas, Wakhanis, Kafirs [41]) can be recognized. All these features fit in exactly with what we know about the ancient Gurjaras, or at least what we have reasons to surmise with regard to them.

However, a Gurjara occupation of the Western Pahāṛī area can have taken place only in the 6th or 7th century. For it is in the 6th century that the Gurjaras are first mentioned among the barbarians sweeping down on the late Gupta world; in the 7th century they had already settled down in kingdoms of their own, whereas between the 8th and 10th century they again vanished from the historical scene. May we assume that the Western Pahāṛī area had once been also a Gurjara kingdom? It would not be surprising. For although the adjoining Panjab has not preserved such clear linguistic traces of Gurjara occupation as the Western Pahāṛī area, we know that from the 7th to the 10th century the middle Panjab, west of the Ravi, formed the Gurjara kingdom of Takka, (Taki)-deśa, under princes bearing the Avar-Turkish title [42] Ālakhāna (Il-Khān). The memory of this kingdom still survives in town-names like Gujrat and Gujranwala. Other place-names indicating original Gurjara occupation are found through the mountains west of the Ravi up to the frontiers of the former Chamba State all over the territory of the old Balor-Basohli principality.

But if such a Gurjara kingdom had existed, we should expect at least some reference to it, even though its identity might not be evident immediately. Now, our two principal sources for the geography of India in the 7th century, the *Bṛihat-Saṁhitā* of Varāhamihira [43], and the itinerary of the Chinese pilgrim Hsüang-tsang (Hiuen Tsang) [44], mention no Gurjaras in the Panjab Himalaya, but among a number of unidentifiable other tribes a prominent kingdom of Brah-

39 *Chamba State Gaz.*; Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.* I, p. 273 (Second tradition; the first, referring to the Gaddī Brahmins and Rajputs, will be discussed below).

40 H. Goetz, *Ind. Cult.* XIII, no. 2, p. 122 ff., 1946; *Proc. 6th Ind. Hist. Congress,* Aligarh 1943, p. 175-180.

41 G. Scott Robertson, *The Kafirs of the Hindukush,* London 1896; Fr. Ratzel, *History of Mankind,* vol. III; R. G. Latham, *Descriptive Ethnology,* II, p. 230 ff.

42 W. M. Mac Govern, *op. cit.*

43 J. F. Fleet, *Ind. Ant.* XXII, p. 169; E. Sachau, *Alberuni's India,* I, p. 299 ff., London 1910.

44 Thomas Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India,* I, p. 329 ff. London 1904.

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mapura. As the ancient name of Brahmor in Chamba was Brahmapura [45], and as the most interesting monuments there belong to the 7th century, it is tempting to identify Brahmor with the Brahmapura of Varāhamihira and Hsüan-tsang. But the matter proves to be not so simple. Hsüan-tsang does not mention Brahmapura in Chamba at all, though he gives detailed descriptions of its next neighbours, Kulu as well as the Jālandhara kingdom which then covered the Kangra valley. On the other hand, he speaks at length of Brahmapura being 300 li (i.e. 50-60 miles) north of Mātipura on the Jamna, not far from the present Hardwar. Moreover two copperplate grants found at Tāleśwar [46] in Kumaon purport to have been issued from a town Brahmapura, not far from Kārttikeyapura, the present Baijnath in Kumaon. Cunningham sought the Brahmapura kingdom in that district. But though quite a number of places have been proposed by various scholars, it has proved impossible to identify Brahmapura with any archaeological site in Kumaon [47]). Moreover, the distances given by Hsüan-tsang do not work out, and even the situation of the hypothetical Brahmapura had to be changed to the north-east of Mātipura, whereas the pilgrim mentions it as being due north of it. The most decisive objection, however, to this identification is that Hsüan-tsang mentions a vast kingdom, and that also Varāhamihira lets it appear to have been an important state, whereas the identification with a place in Kumaon permits only of the existence of a tiny and obscure principality.

We have, therefore, to approach the problem from another angle. Hsüan-tsang's description refers, in the first place, not to a town Brahmapura, but to a kingdom, 4000 li in circuit "with mountains on all sides" [48]. Now, the old Chinese *li* was something like $^1/_5$ or $^1/_6$ of a mile. The Brahmapura kingdom, therefore, must have had a circumference of 630 to 800 miles. These measurements, of course, cannot be taken too literally as at that time exact cartographic surveys were unknown and as we do not know the exact course of the frontier line of Brahmapura. Nevertheless, some estimate is possible. In the whole course of Indian history the Himalayan kingdoms hardly ever expanded into the plains and rarely into the Tibetan highlands. From Hsüan-tsang's account it is clear not only that Brahmapura was situated within the mountains, but also that the outer Himalayan hills were included in other kingdoms, Takideśa (Che-kia), Jālandhara (She-lan-tu-lo), Śatadru (She-to-tu-lo). Thus the Brahmapura kingdom can

45 Vogel, *Antiquities*, p. 7, *A.S.R.* 1902-03, p. 239.

46 Y. R. Gupte, *Ep. Ind.* XIII, p. 109.

47 T. D. Gairola, *J. U. P. Hist. Soc.* XVI, p. 72; J. C. Powell-Price, *ibid.* XVIII, 1945, p. 214 ff.; and IV, p. 5 ff.; E. T. Atkinson, *op. cit.* vol. II, p. 453, 468.

48 The circumference of Brahmapura town is stated to be only 20 li, i.e. ca. 3-4 miles.

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not have had a diametre of more than 50-70 miles. If we should thus roughly allot twice 50 or 70 miles to its southeastern and northwestern frontiers, 500-700 miles still are left for its northeastern and southwestern frontiers. In other words, the Brahmapura kingdom must have extended over 250-350 miles, i.e. it must have covered most of the Panjab Himalaya, from western Kumaon up almost to the Banihal Pass [49].

Now this is practically the area of the present Western Pahāṛī dialect [50], extending from some miles west of Mussoorie to Bhadrawah on the Chandrabhaga and to the mountain ranges enclosing the Kashmir Valley on the southeast. In other directions the parallel is also striking. In the districts which in the 7th century are mentioned as belonging to other kingdoms, Jālandhara or Śatadru, today not Western Pahāṛī, but Panjābī is spoken; and upper Bashahr whither — as we shall see later on — during the Gurjara occupation the indigenous rulers of Kulu are reported to have retreated, likewise is outside the sphere of Western Pahāṛī.

Finally, both Hsüan-tsang and Varāhamihira mention that north of Brahmapura there was Suvarṇagotra or Suvarṇabhū(mi), the "Gold Country" [51]. This

49 Much confusion has been created by the pre-conceived idea that all these hill states had been small. Hsüang-tsang's express statements of the considerable size of all these kingdoms (Kashmir 7000 li circumference, Kulu 3000, Nepal 4000) have, therefore, been disregarded. This misunderstanding apparently is due to a projection of modern political concepts into the so different conditions of India's past. The ancient Indian state consisted, on the average, of a rather small territory direct under the suzerain king or emperor (corresponding to the medieval European royal demesne) surrounded by a vast territory ruled by vassals, tributary tribes and principalities acknowledging merely a nominal affiliation. The frontiers were utterly undefined and overlapped with those of the neighbouring powers, as the peoples of the frontier belt paid allegiance and tribute now to this, now to that overlord. In consequence, a state could be most extensive under a strong ruler, to shrink to almost nothing under a weak prince. Such conditions have obtained in India even in the 18th century, and in Nepal up to the present day. Hsüan-tsang, accepted the maximum claims. For as a Chinese he was accustomed not only to the administration of vast provinces, but also to an ideology which treated independent small states either as rebels or as insignificant barbarians tolerated by the indulgence of the Son of Heaven. On the whole his statements can be accepted. Under the Gonandiya and Karkoṭa rulers Kashmir was the suzerain of part of the Panjab and Pánjab Himalaya and probably even of part of Afghanistan. Nepal was under Aṁśuvarman at the zenith of its power. The claim of Kulu, however, seems to have been in abeyance in Hsüan-tsang's time, but may have been correct in the preceding century. Because of the overlapping of the various claims for suzerainty, however, the aggregate of Hsüan-tsang's figures is much too high. Cf. Sunil Chandra Ray, *Ind. Hist. Qu.* XXX, p 89 f.

Varāhamihira's approach is different. Living in one of the new, not yet stabilized Gurjara kingdoms, he disregards those maximum claims of suzerainty accepted by Hsüan-tsang. He mentions the countries or towns which by virtue of their cultural superiority exercised it, and enumerates the tribes surrounding them, however avoiding to define their ephemerous political affiliations.

50 G. A. Grierson, *op. cit.*

51 Hsüan-tsang gives its position: To the east T'u-han (Tibet), to the north Khotan, to the west San-p'o-ha, i.e. Mo-lo-po = Marpo = Ladakh.

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is Sarthol [52], the "Gold Country" of the Tibetans east of Rudok, known both to Greeks and Indians by hearsay from earliest times. Very little gold trade could pass through Kumaon [53], and the principal trade routes from Sarthol to India were along the Sutlej or through Lahul and Kulu [54], and thus went through the Western Pahāṛī area [55]. The ancient Brahmapura kingdom, therefore, must have been identical with the present area of the Western Pahāṛī dialect. And as we have to make allowance for a frontier belt in which the Gūjarī-Western Pahāṛī language could not get a firm hold, we may add Lahul [56] (later reconquered by the Tibetans). And this Brahmapura kingdom must have been a Gurjara kingdom, which is corroborated by the other, ethnological and archaeological evidence already mentioned [57].

However, where the capital of this kingdom, Brahmapura proper, was situated, is a more difficult question. Naturally we should infer that this must have been Brahmapura-Brahmor in Chamba, situated in the very heart and in the best defensible valley of the state. And this may possibly have been the case, at least since the later 7th century. But all the earliest monuments of Brahmor were erected by raja Meruvarman who, for reasons elsewhere to be discussed, has been dated in the late 7th century, and as temples are an essential part of a capital, this makes the impression that he was the actual founder of Brahmor. This is also the interpretation given by the *Vaṁśāvalī* which says that the site was selected by Meruvarman's father Ājyavarman, a short time before his abdication and death. Un-

52 Fr. Schiern, *Ind. Ant.* IV, p. 255 ff.; also A. H. Francke, *The Chronicles of Ladakh,* Calcutta 1926, p. 76, 94. The goldfields in Nari Khorsum Province, especially at Thok Jalung, even today represent one of the principal revenues of the Dalai Lama; see Sven Hedin, *Trans-Himalaya,* London 1909, I, p 174, 188, II, 276, 284, 394; W. Filchner, *Ein Forscher-Leben,* Wiesbaden 1950, p. 247. The miners still are nicknamed "ants", cp. Santha Rama Rau, *East of Home,* London 1951, p. 101. Other gold washings in Dardistan, at Yolkan near Khotan, near Kopa in the Kwenlun.

53 For transport through Kumaon only the gold washings of Daba (31° 12′: 79° 55′) on the upper Sutlej and on the Manasarowar Lake (30° 40′: 81° 30′) can be considered, the first are rather unīmportant, the second extinct today (Information supplied by the Geological Survey of India).

54 Kulu had an old treaty with Ladakh for the import of iron, copper, also of silver and gold.

55 Much of the gold was also brought to Kashmir via the Indus-Dras route.

56 According to Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.* II, p. 476, Lahul was occupied by Brahmor ca. 600.

57 These Gurjaras are mentioned neither in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* nor by Varāhamihira. But Kalhaṇa's account of the Gonandiya dynasty, under which alone they could have been in contact with Kashmir, is very poor and incomplete. Even in his later chapters Kalhaṇa mentions other states only in case of war or other incisive events. But as there seem to have been no wars between Kashmir and Brahmapura, he had no reason to mention it.

Varāhamihira, on the other hand, mentions neither the Gurjaras of Takkadeśa nor those of Bhīnmāl or Broach, though they are well known from other reliable documents. Thus his silence in this respect is not conclusive. For, as I shall demonstrate later on, *Gurjara* was merely a collective term for the most different tribes, dragged into the same political movement. Varāhamihira, however, enumerates those individual tribes.

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fortunately this king is not found in Meruvarman's own inscriptions who calls his father Devavarman or Divākaravarman. The latter is known also to the *Vaṁśāvalī,* but separated from Meruvarman by an interval of four other princes, including Ājyavarman [58]. If any truth can be culled from this confused tradition, it is only this that Brahmor had been founded just before the accession of Meruvarman. Now, it is interesting that the *Vaṁśāvalī* mentions the foundation of an earlier Brahmapura by a legendary king Maru who in this late chronicle has taken the place of the real ancestor of the Brahmor dynasty, Mūshūṇavarman. But the earlier Brahmor is said to have been in Kashmir. Whether such a place ever existed, is difficult to say. Perhaps we come nearer to a solution when we realize that the name Brahmapura occasionally was given to any town where Brahmins were settled [59]. And as the Gurjaras seem first to have acknowledged the suzerainty of Kashmir [60], Brahmapura may originally have been the name of a moving royal camp where also the Brahmins attached to the king were living.

In any case, in the early 7th century Brahmapura was not far from Matipura-Hardwar. Hsüan-tsang's statement, A.D. 643, that the kingdom was 300 li (i.e. 50-60 miles) north of the latter place, may refer merely to the frontier. For exactly there, in Chaunsa-Bawar, some 6 miles west of Mussoorie, the area of the Western Pahāṛī dialect ends [61].

But it seems probable that also its capital cannot have been very distant from the place where Hsüan-tsang learnt so much about it. Possibly this eastern situation of the Brahmapura capital may even have been enforced by the Indian overlord who thus hoped easily to overawe and control his vassals.

In this connection the Tāleśwar grants [62] appear in their proper light. They are forgeries, but old ones not later than the 8th century., probably even of the 7th century. Their contents seem genuine and their royal seals are cast from a genuine earlier seal: probably they were merely illegal substitutes for genuine copperplates accidentally lost in those troubled times. They mention a capital Brahmapura not far from Kārttikeyapura, the present Baijnath in Kumaon, and a number of

58 Dr. Vogel believes for very convincing reasons that Ājyavarman and his three predecessors were in reality the successors of Meruvarman. See Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* vol. I, p. 276-81.

59 Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* I, pp. 72, 105; II, p. 416; also A. Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India,* pp. 137, 144, 145. Kashmir was then ruled by the "Gonandiya" dynasty according to Kalhaṇa. However confused its record, so much is clear that the famous Hūṇa leaders Mihiragula and Toramāṇa were reckoned to it, and also most other princes must have been half-barbarians.

60 H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India,* Calcutta 1931, I, p. 476. Svapneśvara inscription, Bhubaneśwar, Orissā.

61 Also the population of this area resembles the Dogras but not the Kumaonis.

62 D. C. Sircar, *Bhāratīya Vidyā,* XII, 1951, p. 149. — Y. R. Gupte, *Ep. Ind.* XIII, 1915-16 p. 109 ff.

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villages most of which can likewise be identified. This Brahmapura, tentatively identified with Lakhanpur, may indeed prove to be the Gurjara capital of Hsüan-tsang's time.

But what is most interesting, is the names of the kings Vishṇuvarman, Vṛishavarman, Śrī Agnivarman and Dvijavarman, or Dyutivarman, of the lunar race (*Somavaṁśa*). These names are different from those of the earliest Sūryavaṁśī (solar race) kings of Brahmapura-Brahmor, notwithstanding the common suffix *varman*. They represent a related, but evidently different, earlier dynasty of which, however, only "Śrī" Agnivarman seems to have been of some importance. The dates of their successive reigns are not known as the two grants merely refer to the regnal years of Dyutivarman and Vishṇuvarman (who, moreover, in grant B is treated as the last ruler, whereas in the seals he is counted as the earliest one).

More results can be expected from an analysis of the Brahmor-Chamba tradition. For although the Chamba *Vaṁśāvalī* is not free from serious errors and misconstructions, it is, on the whole, corroborated by the inscriptions and the traditions of the neighbouring states, and it contains some amount of most valuable information which justifies at least a tentative reconstruction of the history of the obscure period with which we are concerned.

The pedigree of the Brahmor kings in the *Vaṁśāvalī* [63] is as follows: Maru (immigrated from Hindustān to Kalāpa and then founded Brahmapura I), Jayastambha, Jalastambha, Mahāstambha, Ādivarman, Devavarman, Mandāra, Kāntāra, Pragalbha(ka), Ājyavarman (settled at Brahmor), Meruvarman (built the Brahmor temples), Suvarṇavarman, Lakshmīvarman (pestilence, Kīra invasion, fall of the Brahmor State), Mūshaṇavarman (lost on the flight and found in a cave, grows up at the court of Suket, reconquers Brahmor), Haṁsavarman, Sāravarman, Sainyavarman (Senavarman), Sujanavarman, Sāhilavarman (founder of Chamba town), Yugākaravarman. The later rulers we need not discuss in this context, as with Sāhilavarman and Yugākaravarman fairly safe historical ground is reached. But most of the preceding rajas would otherwise be unknown, except those mentioned in the inscriptions of Meruvarman which, on palaeographic grounds, are to be placed somewhere about A.D. 700 [64].

The pedigree of Meruvarman's inscriptions and of the Gūṁ (Śivapurī) inscription of Sāmanta Āshāḍha-deva [65] reveals a number of interesting divergences: Moshūṇa as the ancestor of the dynasty, next comes an undefined gap, then Ādityavarman, Balavarman, Divākaravarman, Meruvarman. King Maru is not

63 Vogel, *Antiquities* p. 78 ff.
64 *Ibid.*, p. 97 f.; *A.S.R.* 1902-03, p. 239; Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.* I, p, 278.
65 Vogel, *Antiquities*, p. 145., pl. XI.

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mentioned at all. This is not surprising. For Meruvarman had merely claimed to be a Sūryavaṁśī. However, the authors of the *Vaṁśāvalī* felt it necessary to trace the complete pedigree of the dynasty back to its divine origin. Now in most Rajput *vaṁśāvalīs* king Maru, the "restorer of *kshatriya* rule at the end of the Kali (barbarian rule, but also Buddhist-Jain) Age" is made the heros eponymos of Marudeśa (Marwar), the early home of the Gurjaras in India and of the first Gurjara-Pratihāra kingdoms of Mandor and Bhinmal, thus linking up the mythic pedigrees of the *Purāṇas* and epics with the ruling Gurjara families.

Though this link is artificial, there are no sufficient reasons for doubting the subjective honesty of the Rajput claim to descent from the early divine heroes of the epics and *Purāṇas*. We know that those sagas had a very long growth before they were put down in writing, and that during this period of oral tradition the heroes of many tribes and states were included who in reality could never have had a share in the original "War of the Ten Kings" mentioned in the Ṛigveda [66]. As Indian tribes were living even in the Pamirs and in the heart of Afghanistan, and as not only Buddhism, but also Śaivism, Vaishṇavism and other less orthodox cults flourished there, we have to surmise that in those western frontier areas of Indian civilization the great Indian epics were known also. For quite a number of these people, even the distant Kāmboja nomads of the Pamir, are mentioned amongst the participants in the great battle between the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas, or in the wars of Kṛishṇa. But in the versions circulating amongst these frontier tribes, probably the achievements of the local princes had been more elaborated, and their status glorified. Primitive chieftainship always claims divine origin, and as in Muslim times some of these local dynasties claimed descent from Iskandar (Alexander the Great) we may likewise assume that in earlier times they boasted of Rāma, Arjuna, Kṛishṇa, etc. as their ancestors. But, as the Indians east of the Panjab looked down on these frontier people as semi-barbarians, it is not surprising that those stories were not incorporated into the epics and *Purāṇas* known to us, but that likewise the same claims were revived when the frontier tribes invaded India proper.

However, although in the *Vaṁśāvalī* Mūshūṇa was transformed from the earliest known ancestor of Meruvarman into a considerably later descendant, the traditions connected with his name were preserved. And these are highly revealing. For his mother is said to have lost the newly born infant on her flight after the disastrous defeat of Lakshmīvarman by the Kīras and the fall of Brahmor, that the child was found in a cave in the company of many mice, and that later on it

66 The situation has been exactly the same as with the "catalogue of ships" in Homer's Ilias, or with the subsidiary epics to the *Shāhnāma*.

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grew up, unknown, until Mūshūṇavarman could recover his kingdom. This story contains all the traditional elements of a primitive hero-founder of a dynasty and state, the foundling (Moses, Gilgamesh, etc.) amongst animals (Romulus and Remus, etc.) and the youth in obscurity and difficulty. What here is interesting, is the story of his discovery in a cave full of mice, a typical rationalization of a barbarian totemistic ancestor myth [67]. In the *Vaṁśāvalī* this story was transferred to a place after Lakshmīvarman because the, apparently historical, capture of Brahmor offered just the suitable background for the legend. Another raja with a somewhat similar name was eliminated from the royal pedigree, namely Mṛityuñjayavarman, whom we know from the Proḷī-rā-gaḷā inscription [68].

The next successors of Maru-Mūshūṇavarman also look barbarian. Jayastambha, Jalastambha, Mahāstambha. Names ending in the word *stambha* elsewhere are unknown in India, with the exception of two dynasties, the Śūlakīs of Kedālaka in Orissa (Dhenkanal-Talcher) [69]: Kāñchana Stambha, Raṇa Stambha, Jaya Stambha, Kanoḍa Stambha, Kula Stambha, Nidaya Stambha, and a Mleccha dynasty in Assam [70]: Sāla Stambha, Vigraha Stambha, Pālaka Stambha, Vijaya Stambha, etc. Unfortunately very little is known about these dynasties, though they seem to belong to the same period, i.e. the 6th-8th centuries. But the name of the Sulkī dynasty proves a most valuable clue; they were Sūlikas. In the second half of the 6th century (554?) the Maukhari emperor Īśānavarman of Kanauj routed the Sūlikas "who had an army of countless galloping horses". There has been much speculation as to who these Sūlikas were [71]. They have been identified with the Mūlikas — an also unidentified people —, with a tribe in Kaliṅga, with the Chālukyas of the Deccan, the Cholas of South India, the Solankīs of Gujarat-Rājasthān, the Sūlikas mentioned in the "north-western region" in Varāhamihira's *Bṛihatsaṁhitā* and in the *Vāyupurāṇa,* the Saulika of the *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa.* However, the identifications with the Chālukyas, Cholas and Solankīs stand on more or less hazardous etymologies only, and cannot explain how the name

67 Moreover, if the rationalization of the killed king-father has to be eliminated, the story points to a matriarchal society structure, vestiges of which can be traced everywhere in Rajput tradition (O. R. Ehrenfels, *Mother Right in India,* Hyderabad-Bombay 1941).

68 Vogel, *Antiquities,* p. 148, pl. XI.

69 B. C. Mazumdar, *Orissa in the Making,* Calcutta 1925, p. 101 ff. H. K. Mahtab, *History of Orissa,* Lucknow 1950, p. 42. A. Banerji-Sastri, *J.A.S.B.,* n.s. XXVII, Letters 1931, p. 217 ff.; D. C. Sirkar, *J. Or. Res.* Madras XVIII, p. 45; D. C. Sircar, *Ep. Ind.,* XXVIII, p. 107 ff. Suklīs (sic) still are found in Midnapur, also the princes of Angul State (confiscated 1847) were Sulkīs.

70 For summaries see E. A. Pires, *The Maukharis,* Madras 1934; R. S. Tripathi, *op. cit.,* Benares 1937. Also: B. C. Law, *J. Ind. Hist.* XX, no. 1, p. 65; N. Majumdar, *Ind. Ant.* XLVI, p. 125 ff.; R. N. Dandekar, *op. cit.,* p. 171.

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appears in the "north-western region" which according to the terminology of that time comprised Afghanistan, the Pamirs and Western Turkistan. We do not know of any migration from the south in the direction of Afghanistan. On the other hand the invasions of nomadic tribes from Central Asia were the life problem of those days. And that the Śūlikas "had an army of countless horses", shows but too clearly that they were one of these tribes. The Śūlakīs of Orissa we know only from a few copperplate grants; they are nowhere mentioned as a tribe or people of south-eastern India. They seem to have been no more than a military clan, and may perhaps be regarded as descendants of the invaders attacking Īśānavarman. After their defeat and subjection they may have been used as mercenaries of the Maukharis in distant Orissa where, as aliens, they could not become dangerous, but in those troubled times succeeded in setting up a shortlived principality, probably under the suzerainty of the Bhauma kings. Similar groups are mentioned in the Deccan by Tāranātha [72].

Unfortunately all these facts do not shed much light on the question who the Śūlikas had been. However, they seem to have come from Central Asia. For the *Bṛihatsaṁhitā* connects them with the Gandhāras and Vokkaras (people of Wakhān); the *Matsyapurāṇa* says that they came from the Chakshū (= Vakshu, Oxus). The Śūlikas suddenly appear and disappear in the course of successive Hūna and Gurjara inroads. Probably they were no more than a clan temporarily rallying round them a part of the heterogeneous host of turbulent nomadic and seminomadic tribes then on the move from Central Asia towards the centres of Indian civilization. We shall return to this matter later on.

With Mahāstambha's successor Ādivarman we first reach historical ground. For whereas Meruvarman seems to have thought it wise to pass over in silence his barbarian ancestors, he mentions Ādityavarman as his greatgrandfather. Probably he was the first completely Hinduized prince of the house. It is, therefore, most important to fix his approximate date. Dr. Vogel has tentatively assigned him to the third and fourth decades of the 7th century [73]. This calculation is based on the average of twenty years for each reign, derived from a survey of later Chamba history. But it is obvious that such a calculation can be no more than a temporary expedient in absence of better evidence. In reality some reigns may have been much longer — e.g. Balabhadravarman of Chamba reigned for sixty-two years (1589 to 1641) —, others very short. We must therefore try to stabilize these dates by synchronisms, either direct correlations with datable other happenings or at least with general political constellations in which the recorded

72 *Ind. Ant.* IV, p. 364; B. Ch. Law, *J. Ind.* Hist. XX, p. 65.
73 Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.*, I, p. 274 ff.



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events could have been possible. There is a tradition that the Rajputs and Brahmins of Brahmor immigrated from "Delhi" [74] in the reign of Ājyavarman who, according to Dr. Vogel's calculation, would have ruled in ca. 760-80. As such traditions generally are reliable, however misunderstood they may be in detail, we shall have to discover the historical situation in which such an immigration can have taken place. Delhi then did not yet exist, but it stands apparently for the capital of Northern India which then was Kanauj. Now we know from the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* that in 733 Lalitāditya of Kashmir took Kanauj, and that in his campaign all over India he sent political opponents and hostages back to Kashmir [75]. That people would voluntarily have emigrated from Kanauj to lonely Brahmor, is most improbable; but that political exiles in Lalitāditya's time might have been forced to settle there, is quite acceptable.

Such an interpretation is corroborated by the tradition of the Suket, Mandi, Keonthal and Kashtwar States [76]. The first ruler of the mother state Suket, Vīrasena (Bīr Sen), A.D. 765, is said to have been a descendant of the Senas of Bengal. Now such an early Sena dynasty is not known. But a Bengali brahmin tradition identifies this Vīrasena with a raja Ādisūrya. Ādisūrya = Ādisena, however, points towards Āditya (= Sūrya)-sena, the founder of the later dynasty of Imperial Guptas in Magadha (Bihār-Bengal). As Lalitāditya of Kashmir deported Jīvitagupta II, the last ruler of the same line, to Kashmir [77], it would not seem improbable that other descendants of Ādityasena were exiled to other parts of the Himalaya. Bīrsen of Suket would have been one of them, carving out his own small state after the death of Lalitāditya in 756.

However, if this is correct, we have to shift the reign of Ājyavarman from ca. 760-80 down to somewhere about 730-35, i.e. the time of the fall of Kanauj. We must confess that such a date does not stand on very strong foundations. But it works out very satisfactorily. For in this case the reign of Meruvarman, the founder of Brahmor, has to be fixed somewhere about 650, i.e. a few years after the death of Harshavardhana of Thanesar. And Ādityavarman would have lived in the last decades of the 6th century, probably a contemporary of Śarvavarman Maukhari.

This being granted, we might reconstruct the history of the Brahmapura kingdom like this: Already Īśvaravarman Maukhari had fought with the Śūlika-Gurjaras. His successor settled part of these invaders, after their defeat, in the Himalayan

[74] Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* I, p. 273; *Chamba Gazetteer,* p. 60.
[75] H. Goetz, *J.B.B.R.A.S.* XXVII, pt. 1, p. 43 ff.
[76] Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* I, p. 341, 343; S. R. Sharma, *J.A.S.B.* XXVI, Letters, p. 279 ff., doubts all traditions, in contrast to Hutchison-Vogel.
[77] *Rājataraṅgiṇī,* IV, 322 ff.

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valleys between the Chenab and Sutlej, in the same manner as the later Roman emperors settled defeated Teutonic tribes, as frontier guards, in the devastated provinces along the Rhine and Danube. About the reign of Śarvavarman Maukhari [78] Hindu cultural influence had sufficiently penetrated so that the leading Śūlika families accepted orthodox Hindu religion and assumed Hindu names ending in the suffix *varman* like those of their overlords, the Maukharis [79]. The ruling family probably were the Somavaṁśī *Varmans* of Tāleśwar-Brahmapura in Kumaon. The Sūryavaṁśī *Varmans* then may have been their vassals somewhere, perhaps in the western districts of the kingdom. Possibly the stronger direct control of Harshavardhana of Thanesar over Kulu in the early 7th century may have made them practically independent of Tāleśwar-Brahmapura.

When that place was apparently destroyed by the Tibetan king Srong-btsan-sgam-po (600-650) in the chaotic years [80] subsequent to Harshavardhana's death (A.D. 648), Divākaravarman retreated into the inaccessible Budhal valley, declared his independence and, in assertion of this claim, founded another royal capital Brahmapura-Brahmor. His son Meruvarman then reconquered the whole Brahmapura kingdom and embellished his new capital with the richly carved temples and brass images which are discussed in this book. Under his successors the state again declined. Their names (Mandāravarman, Kāntāravarman, Pragalbhavarman, i.e. the Mountain Varman, the Forest Varman, the Bold Varman) seem rather barbarian. In Bāṇa's *Kādambarī* there is a hardly veiled reference to the loss of Kulu which was conquered by Chandrāpīḍa (713-20) and Tārāpīḍa (720-24/5) of Kashmir [81].

Ājyavarman must have lived in the early reign of Lalitāditya of Kashmir, as already mentioned. That he had become a vassal of Kashmir can be concluded from archaeological evidence. At Manali in Kulu there are vestiges of a fortress guarding the Rohtang Pass in which some sculptures (Fig. 9, p. 67) in the Kashmir style of Lalitāditya's reign have been discovered. Two carved wooden reliefs (Fig. 8, p. 67) in the mixed Kashmir-Kanauj style of the same period stand at Maylang in Lahul. Further down the Chandrabhaga, in Chamba-Lahul, vestiges

78 J. N. Banerjea, *Proc. 15th All-India Or. Conf., Bombay* 1949, p. 298.

79 At that time the Pushyabhūtis of Thanesar seem to have been subordinate to the Maukharis; their sphere of influence extended more in the direction of the southern Panjāb and Rājasthān. The first to rise to real importance was Prabhākaravardhana (died 604).

80 S. Lévi, *Le Népal,* II, p. 148, 1905-08; R. C. Majumdar, *J. Greater India Soc.,* VII, no. 2, p. 32 ff., 1941 and *J.A.S.,* Letters, XIX, no. 1, p. 37 ff., 1953. See also Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* II, p. 484, (Conquest of Kulu by Tibetan Spiti in 7th century) and Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya *Ind. Hist. Qu.* XXX, p 160 f.

81 Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* II, p. 416 ff.

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of Kashmir art can be traced at Markula-Udaipur [82] and at Triloknath [83]. Thus a whole line of strongholds and temples can be traced from the Rohtang Pass through Lahul and probably Pangi, Kashtwar and the Maru-Wardhwan Valley to Kashmir, guarding the empire of Lalitāditya against the Tibetan raiders. Brahmor was, naturally, situated inside this defence line. In Brahmor itself the top gable of the Lakshaṇā Devī Temple [84] and the bust of "Śakti Devī" (a Bodhisattva?) at Chatrarhi tell the same tale.

However, the tradition of the settlement of exiles from Kanauj permits of some other important conclusions. These newcomers could become the leading aristocracy only if the old Śūlika-Gurjara nobles and the earlier Brahmin families had, at least partly, disappeared. Either they had been slain in the wars of the time, or they had been deported in their turn to other parts of India, to some of the Kashmir garrisons in the heart of India or in Central Asia. In any case it must have meant a dangerous weakening of the state. Under Ājyavarman and under his son Suvarṇavarman, who likewise seems to have been a vassal of Lalitāditya, the dangerous consequences of such an imperial interference were not yet apparent. But under Lakshmīvarman (after 760) the Brahmapura kingdom collapsed.

With the rapid disintegration of the Kashmir empire after the death of Lalitāditya A.D. 756 in Sinkiang, the disorganized Brahmor State lost its sole support. A virulent epidemic, probably brought home by the soldiers returning from the emperor's last exhausting campaigns in Central Asia, depopulated Brahmor and a good part of the Brahmapura kingdom. Next Kumaon broke away. Kulu was lost. Then the Tibetans overran Brahmor, Lakshmīvarman was slain in the last desperate battle, and his queen had to flee to Kangra and finally to Suket.

In the last decades of the 8th century Kumaon returned to the rule of its native princes. The Bāgeśwar (Vyāghreśvara) and Pāndukeśvar inscriptions record a line of princes no more called *Varman,* but bearing typical Katyūrī names (Nimbara, Ishṭagaṇadeva, Lalitāsuradeva, and Bhūdeva) and again residing in the old Katyūr capital Kārttikeyapura [85].

Kulu was likewise reconquered by its native rajas. Like the early history of all these hill states, that of Kulu is rather confused; yet it is very clear as to the point that during the same period Kulu was several times invaded by the "Gaddis" and

82 These oldest vestiges are preserved only in copies of the 11th and 16th century; see below.

83 Most of the temple is much later, but the column bases of the original porch of the sanctuary are of a very special type characteristic of the reign of Lalitāditya.

84 The relief, representing Vishṇu as Vaikuṇṭhanātha, is not in its original position; it belonged to another temple and was added to the façade of the Lakshaṇā Devī temple during a much later repair.

85 D. Ch. Sircar, *Bhāratīya Vidyā* XII, 1951, p. 149 ff.; E. T. Atkinson, *op. cit.,* II, p. 469, 471.

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occupied by them for a considerable time — at least for 150 years. First, Chamba with Ladakh, Suket, Bashahr, Kangra and Bangahal are said to have conspired to make Gaṇeśpāl, an illegitimate son of Brahmpāl, raja [86]. In the reign of Śrī Dateśvarpāl a Chamba army under an otherwise unknown prince Amar [varman?] invaded the valley and killed the raja of Makarsa (Makaraha, old name of Kulu). After his father's death Amar made himself independent, but was again defeated by the Chamba troops and slain with his eldest son, whereas the younger son, Sītalpāl, fled to Bashahr. Śrī Jareśvar-Pāl, sixth descendant from Sītalpāl, at last returned and liberated Kulu from Chambyal rule. Some generations later, in the time of Nāradpāl [87], the "Gaddis" again invaded Kulu through the Rohtang Pass, built a fort at Majnakot and besieged Manali Garh, but were at last expelled or annihilated.

The tradition, such as it has come down to us, evidently is coloured by later conditions. For at that time neither Chamba nor the Gaddis existed; Chamba town was founded only in the 10th century and the Gaddis immigrated not before 1000 into the Brahmor Valley. The traditions, therefore, must refer to the old Gurjara-Śūlika kingdom of Brahmapura-Brahmor. Our difficulty is the chronology of the time. As Bhūpāl [88], second successor of Nāradpāl, is mentioned as a contemporary of Bīrsen of Suket after 765, we might count back twenty years on the average per reign which would bring the first mention of Chamba down to 300 and the first invasion from there to 360. However, it looks as if part of the dynastic lines had been not successive but parallel, and that other reigns were very short. The first mention of Chamba in the reign of Gaṇeśpāl is so little in harmony with known historical conditions that we had better leave it aside. But the conquest of Kulu by prince Amar seems to record the Gurjara-Śūlika invasion, and Amar's revolt is compatible with the loose political structure of such a barbarian horde. That his surviving younger son Sītalpāl fled to Bashahr, likewise fits into the picture [89]. For Bashahr lies outside the pale of the Western Pahāṛī dialect and, thus, did not form part of the Brahmapura empire. That Kulu thereafter formed part of the kingdom, appears from Viśākhadatta's drama *Mudrārākshasa,* in which the king of Kulu (Kulūta) is called Chitravarman. No such

86 Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.* II, p. 434.

87 *Ibid.,* p. 435.

88 *Ibid.,* I, p. 342 f.; II, p. 436 f.

89 The name, if historical, creates the impression that his mother had been a princess of the original Kulu dynasty, and that after the suppression of the rebellion by the leading Śūlika clan, he took the side of his mother's family. However, the Pālas can have been only one of several old families, as is proved by the coin of king Vīrayaśa (*A.S.R.* 1907-08, p. 265; and Cunningham, *Coins of Ancient India,* p. 67, pl. IV, 14) and by the Salanu inscription of Śrī Chaṇḍeśvarahastin Vatsa (*A.S.R.* 1902-03, p. 14).

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king is otherwise known to us, and the name may be imaginary; but its suffix *varman* indicates that he was a Brahmapura feudatory, not an indigenous prince [90].

The reconquest of Kulu by Śrī Jareśvarpāl we may tentatively place about 650, the time when the older Brahmapura in Kumaon had been destroyed by the Tibetans of Sron-btsan sgam-po [91]. The utter silence about his next five successors may be due to the fact that they were again subjected by Meruvarman of Brahmor, though tolerated as vassals. For the very fact that the new Brahmapura capital was founded in the inaccessible Budhal valley, shows that Meruvarman did not feel too safe, and therefore tried not to estrange the reconquered areas unnecessarily. However, under Meruvarman's obscure successors this overlordship seems to have soon ceased. Bāṇa's novel *Kādambarī* narrates that king Tārāpīḍa of "Ujjayinī" conquered Kulūta, took the princess Pattralekhā prisoner, and that his queen Vilāsavatī made the princess betel-bearer to prince Chandrāpīḍa. Now, these are only slightly disguised allusions to the political expansion of Kashmir under the Karkoṭa kings [92]. And the subjection of Ājyavarman of Brahmor by Lalitāditya proves to be but the last link in a long chain of diplomatic and military moves, by which his predecessors Chandrāpīḍa and Tārāpīḍa had already broken up the Brahmapura kingdom.

The last Kulu-Brahmor war probably took place late in the reign of Suvarṇavarman of Brahmor or early in that of Lakshmīvarman, soon after the death of Lalitāditya. Bīrsen, who had founded Suket State ca. 765, in his later years conquered Saraj, the southernmost province of Kulu, and subjected its raja Bhūpāl [93]. As this cannot have happened earlier than ca. 780, and as Bhūpāl's predecessors Shīshpāl and Narottampāl seem to have reigned only for a short time, Nāradpāl must have lived somewhere about the middle of the 8th century. The war is said to have lasted twelve years and again to have weakened the Brahmapura forces badly. The tradition of the destruction of a Brahmor army in the gorge of Rahla-Kothi near the Rohtang Pass appears very fantastic, but is borne out by the local conditions.

The Kīra invasion which gave the *coup de grace* to the Brahmapura kingdom, can be identified with certainty. The term 'Kīra' generally was used for the hardly known tribes in the hinterland of Kashmir; in the middle ages, when the

90 Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.* II, p. 416.

91 Dr. Vogel's attempt to synchronize it with the later "Kīra" (Tibetan) invasion under Khri-sronglde-btsan seems to me untenable because Śrī Jareśvarpāl was the eighth predecessor of Bhūpāl, the contemporary of Bīr Sen of Suket, ca. 765-80, and the descendant in the sixth generation of prince Amar who must have lived somewhere about 570, i.e. the reign of Īśānavarman Maukhari.

92 Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit,* II, p. 416 ff.

93 *Ibid.*, I, p. 342.

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Dards, Bhauṭṭas, etc. were already known, it referred mainly to those Tibetans who were not the immediate neighbours of the Himalayan Indians [94]. Since their conversion to Buddhism under Srong-btsan sgam-po in 638 the Tibetans had become restless [95]. This king seems temporarily to have overrun northern India ca. 648-50 [96]. Then king rMang-srong-mang-btsan (650-679) warred with the Turks and Chinese; Gung-srong 'du-rje (679-705) invaded the upper Hoangho Valley, Khotan, Baltistan and Nepal; Khri-lde-btsug-brtan-mes-'ag-tshoms (705-55) attacked China and Kashmir and could be kept at bay only with the utmost difficulty; Khri-srong lde-btsan (755-97) at last annihilated Lalitāditya of Kashmir in Sinkiang, looted the Chinese capital Ch'ang-an, and occupied Hsi-an fu and Szu-ch'uan. Khri-srong lde-btsan's hordes overran also Brahmor [97], Kulu and Mandi. Tibetan inscriptions [98] of this time are found on some rocks at Ghosan in the Budhal Valley not far from Brahmor, others in Kulu, on the road between Manali and Katrain. Ravalsar, 20 miles south of Mandi on the Suket road, is even today visited by Tibetan pilgrims as the Zahor [99] of Padmasambhava, the spiritual guide of the Tibetan conqueror, and the actual founder of Lamaism. However, under Khri-srong lde-btsan's weak successors the Tibetan empire rapidly declined, and after the assassination of Dar-ma dbyig-dur-btsan by a monk in 842, it was divided and soon even subdivided. Thus, the conquests of the Tibetans in the Indian Himalaya were again lost after a few decades.

The fact that Lakshmīvarman's widow fled not down the Ravi valley to the western provinces of the kingdom, but to Kangra and Suket, shows that these States first had made themselves independent [100]. For all practical purposes the Brahmapura kingdom had ceased to exist.

94 Vogel, *Antiquities* I, p. 99; Kīras are mentioned also in the Kangra Valley, especially at Kīragrāma-Baijnāth. But these were merely some scattered groups of unknown origin. They may represent a residue of the Tibetan invasion of the late 8th century, or may have been settled by Sāhilavarman of Chamba after his victory over the Kashmiri-Hindu Śāhi invasion in the 10th century.

95 A. H. Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet,* Calcutta 1926.

96 S. Lévi, *Le Népāl* II, p. 148; R. C. Majumdar, *J.A.S. Letters* XIX, no. 1, p. 37.

97 Vogel, *Antiquities,* p. 255: a reference in the T'ang annals (T'ang-shu) that the Tibetans then held Po-lo-man, probably refers not to Brahman = India(?), but rather to Brahmapura.

98 Vogel, *Antiquities,* p. 253. According to A. H. Francke the title "Garuḍa Lord" was used only under the early kings of Tibet.

99 A. H. Francke, *op. cit.,* p. 65. Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.* II, p. 379; J. Ph Vogel, (*JASB* LXXI, pt. 1, p 35 ff. 1902); Man Mohan, *A History of Mandi State,* Lahore 1930. On the other hand B. Bhattacharyya, *The Home of Tantric Buddhism,* (B.C. Law Volume, I, p. 75 ff., 1945) and *An Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism,* London 1932, p. 44 f., seeks Zahor in Sabhār, Dacca District. May Zahor in Mandi represent a re-allocation, like the Buddhist cult centres in Udyāna-Gandhāra in their relation to Uddiyāna near Kāmākhya and Sirihaṭṭa in Assam? And may we ascribe this to the Magadha exiles of the 8th century in the Himalaya?

100 Vogel, *Antiquities,* I, p. 10 ff.; Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.* I, p. 283 ff.

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However, the *Vaṁśāvalī* records that on her flight through Trehta (ancient Trighaṭṭaka), the upper Ravi valley, the widow of Lakshmīvarman at Garoh bore a son who had to be left behind, but was miraculously saved by the wazīr and purohit. The miraculous circumstances of his birth and recovery in a cave full of mice obviously refer to the earliest known ancestor of the Brahmor dynasty, Mūshūṇa or Mūshaṇavarman. But whether the whole legend of that mythic Gurjara-Śūlika hero has been inserted here by the authors of the chronicle, changing the name of the prince, or whether the latter had in fact been named Mūshaṇavarman (II) after his ancestor, we cannot decide. It is possible that the name of Mūshaṇavarman has been substituted by the authors of the chronicle for that of Mṛityuñjayavarman which is absent in the *Vaṁśāvalī,* but known to us from the Proli-ra-gala inscription [101]. However, as the characters of that inscription resemble those of the grants of Vidagdhavarman (ca 960-80), the sequence of the rulers must have been altered. This is, of course, possible, as in their reconstruction the authors of the chronicle had to find not only a ruler with a somewhat similar name, but also a suitable historical situation such as the Kīra invasion indubitably had been. On the other hand, the possibility of the exposure and recovery of a baby during such a precipitate flight cannot be rejected, the more so as the place of the event still is shown, and then only the picturesque details may have been taken over from the old myth.

Also the later history of Mūshaṇavarman II [102] looks romantic and may be mere romance, but is in keeping with similar strictly historical episodes. He grew up in obscurity at Kangra and later at Suket, until he was discovered, married to a daughter of the raja of Suket and at last could reconquer his patrimony with the help of a Suket force. But we should cherish no illusions as to the importance of these events. Suket was at that time a rather powerful state, controlling also the whole area of later Bilaspur, Mandi, Kulu, and eastern Kangra. Mūshaṇavarman's principality cannot have comprised more than the Budhal Valley and some adjoining section of the Ravi Valley; and he was no more than one of the many feudatories of Suket, in its turn a vassal of the Pratihāra empire of Kanauj [103]. It is, therefore, not surprising that of his next four or five successors we know only the names. They were not sovereign princes at all, and might have been forgotten if in the 10th century Sāhilavarman had not founded the Chamba kingdom which claimed to be the heir of Brahmor and lasted until our own day.

101 Vogel, *Antiquities,* I, p. 148 ff., pl. XI.
102 Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* I, p. 281 ff.
103 Tibet seems to have retained some control deep into the 9th century, see *ibid.* p. 373 f.

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Despite this claim to continuity Chamba State has, therefore to be regarded as a new foundation independent of that of Brahmor. Although the documents and traditions about Sāhilavarman [104] are exceptionally copious, the circumstances of this second foundation of the state are likewise mysterious. How could an obscure feudatory of a small vassal kingdom of the Pratihāra emperors suddenly become a formidable power in the Panjab Himalaya? Even a highly gifted personality could achieve this only under exceptionally favourable circumstances. But on these subjects both documents and traditions are rather reserved. Some useful clues can be gathered from the *Vaṁśāvalī:* "He, engaged in severe austerity with his lawful wife on the southern slope of the Himalaya, attained his object and became accomplished in yoga. Then there appeared wizards, eighty-four in number, to give him a boon", allegedly because he had no sons. Two grants [105] issued by his descendants Somavarman and Āsaṭavarman, the sons of Sālavāhanavarman, in 1056-66, mention him as a great warrior, the protector of Kulu and Trigarta (Kangra), the victor over Kīras, Durgaras, Saumaṭikas and Turushkas (Turks), and as a pious donor at holy Kurukshetra. Now it is interesting that the two grants, written not much more than a century after his death, know nothing of Sāhilavarman's interest in yoga. Of course, it is very probable that he went to Kurukshetra just as a pilgrim. But why was he absent for an apparently long time? From where could he collect such numerous troops as to beat off several formidable invasions into the western Himalaya? Why did he get the support and advice of the saint Charpaṭnāth and of his Siddha-yogīs? From where could he draw the considerable revenues necessary to build a new capital with an establisment of temples such as no other place in the Himalaya between Kashmir and Kumaon could boast of in his time? All this was beyond the outlook, resources and possibilities of a small and dependent local chieftain such as the Brahmor rajas had been at that time.

The only possible explanation is that Sāhilavarman, discovering a better field for his energies than his tiny patrimony, had become an officer in the Pratihāra army, and at last was made a general and governor of part of the western frontier of the empire; and that, when that empire began to disintegrate, he founded a strong kingdom of his own by annexing the valleys around Brahmor, though still owning allegiance to the weak Pratihāra emperors and thus responsible for the safety of the western frontier. On this account he had his capital moved to Chamba from where he could easily control Pangi, Churah, Balor, and the exits of the Ravi and Beas Valleys into the plains.

104 Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.*, I, p. 283 ff.; Vogel, *Antiquities*, I, p. 98 ff.
105 Vogel, *Antiquities*, I, p. 180 ff., pls. XXIII-XXV; Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.*, I, p. 287 f.

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The times were favourable to such a career. Under Bhoja Ādivarāha (ca. 840-90) and Mahendrapāla (893-907/8) the Pratihāra empire had reached the zenith of its power. Then a period of weak or short reigns followed, even the sequence of which is disputed [106]. Bhoja II Mahīpāla I was attacked by Indra III Rāshṭrakūṭa (914/5-917) some time before the latter's coronation [107], and by Śaṁkaravarman of Kashmir (883-902) [108], and had to flee from Kanauj. Until about 954 the suzerainty of the Rāshṭrakūṭas extended up to Kalinjar and Allahabad (Prayāga), not far from the gates of Kanauj; and by the occupation of Chitorgarh they controlled Rājasthān, also the original home of the Pratihāras. After Mahīpāla I there followed a series of princes whose reigns rarely lasted for more than a few years, and whose sovereignty even extended only over some parts of the weakened Pratihāra empire. When about 954 the Rāshṭrakūṭas were expelled, and when Mahīpāla II was brought back to Kanauj by Dhaṅga Chandela, the Pratihāra emperors had become powerless puppets in the hands of their mighty vassals who divided the empire between them, the Chandelas and Haihayas, Paramāras, Chauhāns, etc. This loose confederacy broke up under the inroads of Maḥmūd of Ghazni.

As we have seen, under Bhoja I and Mahendrapāla the Pratihāra empire had extended up to the Ravi, whereas west of that river the Gurjara kingdom of Takkadeśa formed a vassal buffer state.

Further to the west Kashmir seems to have retained its control over Afghanistan and the western Panjab, at least nominally. But in 786 Kabul was taken by a Muslim expedition, and about 870 the indigenous Turkī Śāhī princes, descendants of the Kidāra-Kushāns and White Huns (Ephthalites), were superseded by the Brahmin Śāhī dynasty founded by Lalliya [109]. In the meantime Avantivarman (855-83) [110] of the Utpala dynasty had restored the power and prosperity of Kashmir. His son Śaṁkaravarman (883-902?) [111] revived the claims of Kashmir over Afghanistan and the Panjab and defeated Lalliya, the Gurjara Ālakhāna

106 Niharranjan Ray, *Ind. Ant.* LVII, p. 230; H. C. Ray Chaudhuri, *Indian Culture,* VIII, p. 199, 1940.

107 A. S. Altekar, *The Rāshṭrakūṭas and their Times,* Poona 1934.

108 The account in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* seems to imply that Śaṁkaravarman acted in alliance with the Rāshṭrakūṭas against the combined forces of the Pratihāras, the Ālakhāna of Takkadeśa and Lalliya of Kabul. This favours the assumption of an earlier campaign about 885 when Kṛishṇa II was on the Rāshṭrakūṭa throne, — in case our traditional dates for Śaṁkaravarman and Lalliya be correct. For is it probable that Śaṁkaravarman could defeat the great Mahendrapāla and the Śāhī? And we know nothing of any successful Rāshṭrakūṭa campaign under Kṛishṇa II.

109 H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India* (Early Mediaeval Period), Calcutta 1931-36.

110 M. A. Stein, *Rājataraṅgiṇī,* Westminster 1900, Book V.

111 *Rājataraṅgiṇī,* V, 128 ff. (transl. M. A. Stein, I, p. 117 ff.); Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* I, pp. 42 f., 113, II, p. 669.

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(Il-Khān) of Takkadeśa and, temporarily at least, Pṛithvīchandra of Trigarta at the time when Bhoja II Mahīpāla I was expelled from Kanauj by Indra III Rāshṭrakūṭa. After Śaṁkaravarman's death Prabhākaradeva, minister of queen Sugandhā, undertook an expedition to Kabul and installed Lalliya's son Toramāṇa-Kamaluka as a vassal of Kashmir about 904. Diddā, daughter of Siṁharāja of Lohara, who was the queen of Kshemagupta (950-58) and de facto ruler over Kashmir until 1003, probably was Toramāṇa's granddaughter.

Thanks to this connection with the royal house of Kashmir the Śāhīs took over the provinces in the Panjab, including Takkadeśa. Though first Śāhī Jayapāla (965-1001) succeeded in expanding his rule over the eastern Panjab and the Kangra Valley, it seems probable that already Toramāṇa (902/4—ca. 940) and Bhīmapāla (ca. 940-65) had tried to add the territories beyond the Ravi. The crisis of the Pratihāra empire, continuing after the combined attack by Indra III and Śaṁkaravarman, must have been too tempting.

On the other hand, the tradition of Pratihāra greatness was not yet dead, and thus there were generals who were eager to defend the frontiers, but who had also to fend more or less for themselves, without more than the moral support of the emperors. One of those military governors of the western Pratihāra frontier Sāhilavarman seems to have been, whom his acquaintance with local conditions must have recommended for the post. Thus he rescued Trigarta, and defeated the lord of Durgara [112] and the Saumaṭikas (Vallāpura-Balor) [113], the guardians of the frontier on the Kashmir side. Who the Kīras in this case had been, we do not know for certain. As the term applied mainly to the semi-barbarian tribes of the hinterland of Kashmir, they may have been Dards, Ladakhis or other mercenaries in the Kashmir service. Possibly Kīragrāma (Baijnāth) [114] in the Kangra District was a colony of prisoners of war settled there by Sāhilavarman. The Turushkas can have been only the Turkish soldiers of the Śāhī army.

But when the Pratihāra empire more and more dissolved into a confederation of former vassal states, Sāhilavarman must have consolidated his governorship into a semi-independent kingdom, apparently not without opposition from those who had accepted him as a mere Pratihāra governor. For he is represented not only as the protector of Trigarta and Kulūta, but also as the victor over these states.

As the centre of this kingdom Sāhilavarman selected Chamba [115], on a terrace

112 Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.*, II, p. 518.

113 *Ibid.*, II, p. 590.

114 A. Cunningham, *A. S. R.* V, p. 178; G. Bühler, *Ep. Ind.* I, p. 97 ff.; Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.*, I, p. 108.

115 Vogel, *Antiquities*, I, p. 10 ff.; Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.*, I, p. 283 ff.; *Gazetteer of Chamba State*, p. 73.

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above the junction of the Sala river with the Ravi, and at the foot of the Chuari Pass, not far from the passes to Churah and the entrance of the Ravi into the gorge leading to the plain. At the back protected by the steep Shah Madar hill, on the river by not less steep slopes, towards the upper Ravi and the Sala valleys by ridges projecting from the Shah Madar hill, the place was a natural fortress according to the standards of those times. The high Sarota valley supplied it with drinking water. The foundation of the town encountered considerable difficulties. A local raṇa (chieftain) who had his fort on a hill on the other bank of the Sala, had to be dispossessed; a grant of land to Brahmins had to be converted into a permanent tax-rent; a human sacrifice — Sāhilavarman's own rani — was needed to propitiate the spirits displeased with the channel leading the waters of the Sarota into the town. But soon splendid temples arose, in fact the most monumental group of Pratihāra temples in the whole western Himalaya west of the Sutlej, and the marble for the idols was brought from afar — the "Vindhyas" [116] —, again at the cost of the life of two sons of the ruler.

In all this planning Sāhilavarman was advised by "eighty-four wizards" led by the saint Charpaṭnāth (Charpaṭi, Charpaṭa). Here two different traditions seem to have been mixed up. Charpaṭnāth (Charpaṭi) is known both to the Mahāyāna Buddhist and Śaiva tradition as a guru respectively of the "Siddhāchārya", or of the Kāṇphaṭa yogī (Gorakhnāthī) sect. Unfortunately the time of his life is most uncertain. Tucci [117] has attributed him to the 10th century on the evidence of the Chamba chronicle. But Dr. Benoytosh Bhattacharyya [118], another great authority on Tantric Buddhism, has pointed out that Tāranātha's *History of the Eighty-Four Wizards* (i.e. Siddhāchāryas) [119] mentions him as a contemporary of the famous Lui-pā, and the guru of Kukkurīpāda (Kakkuti). On other evidence he has dated Luipā about 669 and Kukkurīpāda about 693. In other words, the saint Charpaṭnāth would have been a contemporary of Meruvarman of Brahmor, and not of Sāhilavarman, the founder of Chamba town. As a Śaiva, or Buddhist Tāntrik, Charpaṭi would probably have been connected with the foundation of Śaiva and especially Śākta temples, such as those of Brahmor. Also the peculiar activities of the saint and of his eighty-four (sic!) disciples would fit much better into the cultural context of Meruvarman's time. And finally the shrines of the

116 This reference to the Vindhya has been questioned. However, if Sāhilavarman was a Pratihāra military governor, it is not impossible that the marble was fetched, if not from the Vindhya, at least from northern Rajputana.

117 G. Tucci, *JASB,* n.s. XXVI Letters, p. 125, where other literary references to Charpaṭi are quoted.

118 B. Bhattacharyya, *Sādhanamālā,* II, p. XLIII, CII, Baroda 1928.

119 A. Grünwedel and Bh. N. Datta, *Mystic Tales of Lama Tārānātha,* Calcutta 1944.

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eighty-four wizards are actually at Brahmor, not at Chamba. Thus it appears that the original Charpaṭi legend referred to the foundation of Brahmor by Meruvarman. However, it is not impossible that the saint was connected also with the foundation of Chamba, not of the capital of Sāhilavarman, but of an earlier settlement. For fragments of the foundation of a late Gupta temple [120] have been discovered not far from the Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa temple. Moreover there is no reason to reject the story as far as it is connected with Sāhilavarman. Indian gurus not seldom are named after the founder of a sect, whose spiritual successors they are. The fact that in the tradition the derivative form Charpaṭa alternates with the original Charpaṭi [121], makes it probable that the guru and adviser of Sāhilavarman was a later Kānphaṭa saint of the same sect. It is worth mentioning that in the Pratihāra empire the Gorakhnāth (Kānphaṭa) sect has exerted an enormous influence as religious and cultural missionaries, especially in the western, half-barbarian provinces. We can well imagine that the Pratihāra government, unable to support Sāhilavarman otherwise, had sent to him a "political and cultural mission" of experts. That this mission cannot have been composed exclusively of Śaiva ascetics, is evident from the predominant role of the Vaishṇava state cult of Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa in the new capital.

Sāhilavarman's successor Yugākaravarman [122] (ca. 940-60) seems still to have kept his father's kingdom intact. The erection of the Gaurī-Śaṁkara temple at Chamba, with its magnificent brass idol, by the king, and of the Narsingh temple at Brahmor by his queen Tribhuvanarekhā speaks for a time of peace and prosperity. But under his successors Vidagdhavarman (ca. 960-80) and Dodakavarman (acc. ca. 980) [123]) the kingdom must have quickly declined, and under the next two rulers Vichitravarman and Dhairyavarman passed through another serious crisis. The absence of big monuments and, after Dodakavarman [124], of all evidence beyond the names of the next rulers points to a rapid disintegration. About 965 Jayapāla had come to the Śāhī throne, a vigorous prince who expanded his kingdom, threatened in the west by the Muslim rulers of Ghazni, over the eastern Panjab, moved his capital to Bhatinda and probably also occupied Kangra Fort [125], the capital of Trigarta. For on the heels of the Śāhīs there followed the

120 Now transferred to the Bhuri Singh Museum.

121 This seems to be an old confusion; e.g. the *Āgamaprāmānya* of Yāmunāchārya spells the name Charpaṭa (see Tucci *op. cit.*, p. 125 ff.).

122 Vogel, *Antiquities* I, pp. 100 f., 159 ff. pl. XVI; Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.* I, p. 289.

123 Vogel, *Antiquities,* I, pp. 101 f., 164, pl. XVII, 172, pl. XIX*a,* 174 pl. XIX*b;* Hutchison-Vogel, I, p. 101 f.

124 The last monuments are the later Tur rock inscription (Vogel, *Antiquities,* I, p. 147 f., pl. XII), the Sungal and Sai grants of Vidagdhavarman and of Dodaka (*ibid.* p. 172 f., pl. XIX*a*), possibly also the Proli-ra-gala inscription of Mṛityuñjayavarman (*ibid.,* p. 148 ff., pl. XI).

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Muslim invaders. Jayapāla was not able to stem the advance of sultan Sabuktegīn in the battle of Lamghan (980), notwithstanding substantial support from the various Rajput kingdoms still acknowledging the last Pratihāras as their nominal overlords. His successor Ānandapāla (1001-13) was expelled from the Panjab. Trilochanapāla (1013-21) failed to reconquer it, though supported by an army under Tuṅga, the general of Saṁgrāmarāja (1003-28) of Kashmir.

Thus soon after 964 — the last date in an inscription of Vidagdhavarman — Chamba must have lost its hold on the Kangra Valley. And also elsewhere its authority collapsed. For Lakshmaṇsen of Suket invaded Kulu [126]. Soon afterwards Kulu became an aggressive state, its rajas Santokhpāl, Teghpāl and Uchitpāl attacking Ladakh, Baltistan and Tibet [127]. In the west, Churah was lost to the Balor kingdom, as early in the 11th century (1028/9, 1041) we find it under the control of Trailokyadeva [128]. The worst disaster, however, seems to have been the result not of the attacks from the surrounding states, but of a mass invasion by the present Gaddis of Brahmor. The Gaddis (Gadhaiyas) [129] were a semi-nomadic tribe inhabiting the Panjab, probably Takkadeśa, though originally they may have come from the Hindukush region, as they have many affinities with the Kafirs [130]. Whether the earlier advance of the Śāhīs or the Muslim invasion had driven them into the Kangra valley, we do not know. But when Sultan Maḥmūd attacked Nagarkot, most of them seem to have moved beyond the Dhaula Dhar into Brahmor which since then has become the Gaddi country *par excellence* (Gadarān). Finally Chamba, so badly weakened, was invaded by king Anantadeva (1028-63) of Kashmir, and its raja Sālavāhana defeated and killed in 1059/60 [131].

Chamba recovered again under Somavarman (ca. 1060-80) [132] and was a flourishing hill state until the Muslim invasion, was then subjected by Trigarta, recovered again between 1330 and 1623, was again subjected by Nurpur, and in 1641-45 became the modern Chamba State, which survived until 1948. But with this later history we are not concerned [133].

125 When Sultan Maḥmūd attacked Nagarkoṭ in 1009, it was one of the last Śāhī strongholds.

126 Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* I, p. 345, II, p. 437.

127 *Ibid.* II, p. 438.

128 Vogel, *Antiquities,* I, p. 176, pl. XX-XXII, Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* II, p. 593 f., see also *Rājataraṅgiṇī* VII, 220, 588-90.

129 A. Cunningham, *A. S. R.,* vol. II; *Chamba State Gaz.* p. 137; Ibbetson, etc., *op. cit.,* II, p. 255 ff.

130 They are not a homogeneous group, and part of them are associated also with the Ahīrs and Ghosīs.

131 Vogel, *Antiquities,* I, p. 102; Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* I, p. 290.

132 Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* I, p. 291 ff.; Vogel, *Antiquities,* I, p. 180 ff.; pls. XXIII-XXV.

133 See Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* I, pp. 296-339 and also H. Goetz, *J. Ind. Hist.* XXX, p. 293, and XXXI, p. 135.

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What interests us here, is the Gurjara kingdom of Brahmapura, from the end of the 6th to the second half of the 8th century. We have discussed the second Pratihāra-sponsored Rajput kingdom of Sāhilavarman and of his successors only, because its relationship with and contrast to the older Gurjara state are essential for the understanding of many problems of the latter. Despite the claim of dynastic continuity, the Brahmor kingdom has not been identical with Chamba State. It had been a political and cultural phenomenon of a very different character, and though its heritage has had much influence on later Chamba, it has to be interpreted in quite another light.

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CHAPTER III

THE REMNANTS OF "GURJARA" CIVILIZATION

From our historical analysis it has become most probable that the Brahmapura kingdom was not a normal Hindu state, but a frontier state founded by barbarian invaders and then slowly integrated into Hindu society and civilization. This process was partly peaceful, through the adoption of orthodox Hindu customs, class ideals and claims, cults and arts, finally through intermarriage; partly brutally enforced by the decimation of the barbarian upper class who were sacrificed as soldiers, or deported, in small units, to other parts of India [1], and by the settlement of exiles from the Indian plains in their stead. It was intensified by the devastation of the areas of both the old capitals which, naturally, would have been the principal targets of any enemy attack. Tāleśwar-Brahmapura disappeared after the death of Harshavardhana of Thanesar, and its Gurjara population must have fled or perished, as today its site lies outside the Western Pahāṛī-Gūjarī linguistic area. Brahmor-Brahmapura was resettled in the reign of Ājyavarman by Lalitāditya of Kashmir, devastated by the Tibetans and at last occupied by the Gaddis so that for almost a millennium it forms a separate ethnic enclave in the Western Pahāṛī area, although the Gaddis have adopted the dialect of that area. But outside those centres of power, the isolation of the valleys of the middle Himalayan zone has reduced outside interference to a minimum, and rendered the infiltration of orthodox Hindu civilization slow and superficial. Everywhere we find it mainly in the old state capitals and district centres, whereas in the rural districts proper the older forms of life, Khaśa, Gurjara or Gaddi, have survived at least up to the time of the great Muslim invasion on the eve of the 13th century. This permits us to reconstruct, to some extent, the civilization of the old Brahmapura kingdom.

As we have already seen, the close relationship of the Western Pahāṛī dialect with Gūjarī, as well as the history of the Brahmapura kingdom prove that the dominant population there in the 6th-8th centuries had been Gurjaras. But this

[1] A check-up of the latest known setlements of the former barbarian conquerors, Hūṇas, Ahīrs, Sūlikas, etc. leads us to Orissa, Mahākosala, Malwa, the Deccan, Soraṭh, etc., whereas the peaceful or backward masses of the same invaders still survive in the N.W. Frontier Province, the Panjab, Western Himalaya, Rajasthan and Gujarat.

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does not lead us very far. For up to the present day the identity of the Gurjaras represents an unsolved problem. They have been claimed to have been Indians, Iranians and even Turks [2]. Obviously something can be said for each of these theories. And yet none of them works out satisfactorily, perhaps because they tend to simplify the problem too much in equating the Gurjaras merely with one ethnic group.

For we should not lose sight of the character of such barbarian mass migrations. Wherever we have more detailed information, whether about the invasions of the Hyksos or of the "Sea Peoples" into Egypt, of the Teutons, Huns, and Slavs into the Roman Empire, or of the Tatars into China, it always was an avalanche of tribes of the most different racial and cultural type, fleeing one before the other, pushed onward in order not to be subjected, dragged on as vassals or voluntary associates of the victor, constantly changing their leaders, federations swelling to countless numbers with victory, breaking up with defeat, reforming under new leaders, part of them settled at last on the frontier as defenders against the next impact of the same avalanche, or deported to distant provinces where they would be harmless amidst a foreign population. Of the Hun invasion into Europe only the nucleus was genuine Huns, of the Mongol invasion into China or the Muslim countries only the picked cavalry were actual Mongol nomads.

The same seems to have been the case with the barbarian invasions overrunning the Gupta Empire. At first we hear only of the Pushyamitras and Hūṇas; the Gurjaras are not mentioned. After the victories of Yaśodharman the Huns were broken up, and abruptly we are confronted with the Śūlikas, who again were superseded by the Hūṇas, and these, in their turn, definitively by the Gurjaras. Obviously it is always the same host of barbarian tribes, but under the alternating leadership of various clans and chieftains who got the upper hand and were able to promise pasture and loot. It is, therefore, doubtful whether even

2 The literature on the subject is too copious to be quoted in extenso. Leaving aside writers like K. M. Munshi, D. C. Ganguly, D. R. Sharma and others, who for nationalistic reasons want to explain away a phenomenon quite common and natural within the broad frontier belts surrounding every civilization, we may distinguish the following schools: 1) Indian: S. B. Chaudhuri, *Ind. Hist. Qu.* XXVI, p. 118 f. [= Kāmbojas], 2) Undefined foreigners: A. M. T. Jackson in the *Bombay Gazetteer*; D. R. Bhandarkar, *Ind. Ant.* XL, p. 7 ff.; *J.B.B.R.A.S.* old series XXI, p. 413 ff., P. G. Shah, *J. Gujarat Res. Soc.* I, no. 4, p. 16 ff.; S. K. Dikshit, *ibid.*, p. 126 ff.; Bhupendranath Banerji, *J. Bihar & Orissa Res. Soc.* XXVII, pt. 1, p. 34 ff.; V. A. Smith, *J.R.A.S.* 1909, p. 53 ff., 247 ff. Niharranjan Ray *Ind. Hist. Qu.* IV, p. 740 f.; W. M. Mc Govern, *The Early Empires of Central Asia*, Chapel Hill 1939; 3) Iranians or slight Iranian affiliation: Cunningham, *A. S. R.*, II [Yue-chi = Tokharians], G. A. Grierson, *op. cit.*, IX, pt. 4; H. D. Sankalia, *J. Gujarat Res. Soc.* VIII, p. 82 ff.; 4) Hun or Turkish Origin: J. M. Campbell, *Bombay Gazetteer*, IX, 1, [= Khazars]; Bagchi, *J. Greater India Soc.* X, p. 107 ff., (a Hūṇa race, possibly Wu-sun < Gusur, Gusar > Gurjar).

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minor units had been homogeneous, as remnants of defeated tribes were absorbed, as sub-clans, by more successful groups. The tribal names of certain Rajput sub-clans point to developments of this kind.

The first leading group had been the Pushyamitras whose identity is so uncertain that scholars even disagree whether they were Indians or frontier barbarians. The fact that the Pushyamitras were the first to attack the Gupta Empire and later on co-operated with the Ephthalites (White Huns), makes it possible to identify them with the Tunguse Druggu or T'u-ku-hun under their king Mu-li-yen (Mululikan) who emigrated from Manchuria to the border of the Taqlamaqan about 250, and according to the *Pei shi* and *Sung shu,* invaded Khotan in 445 and occupied Kashmir ca. 446-452. This Mu-li-yen must be identical with the Mihirakula who "several centuries" before Hsüan-tsang's time attacked Gandhāra from the east, killed its king and destroyed numerous monasteries and at last invaded India where he was defeated by Bālāditya [3]. This Mihirakula is not identical with the Ephthalite Mihiragula, the son of Toramāṇa who almost two centuries later likewise became a scourge of the Gupta world [4]. Mu-li-yen returned to Central Asia, but part of his horde seems to have joined the Ephthalites, and at last to have settled in Marwar and southern Gujarat. The sculptures of Devni-Mori [5], Idar (early 6th century), the Jain bronzes from Vasantgarh and Akota [6] (ca. 7th century), and stray stone sculptures of the 7th-8th century from Jaisalmer and Kiradu down to Gujarat prove the presence of a pronounced Mongol race in this area. People of this type are found in Gujarat and Sorath (Saurāshṭra) even today.

The successors of the Pushyamitra-Druggu were the Ephthalites [7] or White Huns, so called because of their previous association with the (Black) Huns [Hiung-nu = Chionites] of Central Asia. Early in the 5th century they had migrated from Zungaria where they had been vassals of the Avars, into Kashgaria and Sogdiana and finally attacked the Kidāra-Kushān kingdom of Bactria (Tur-

3 Yang-Hsien-yi, *Oriental Art* I, no. 4, p. 166 f., 1949.

4 The date and identity of Mihiragula the son of Toramāṇa are fixed by the Mandasor, Eran and Gwalior inscriptions, (Fleet, *Gupta Inscriptions,* p. 142 ff.). The assumption of two Mihiragulas is not more objectionable than that of several Toramāṇas; and we know of at least three Toramāṇas.

5 H. Goetz, *J. Gujarat Res. Soc.* XIV, p. 1 ff..

6 U. P. Shah, *A Note on the Akoṭā Hoard of Jaina Bronzes* (in B. Subba Rao, *Baroda through the Ages,* Baroda 1953, p. 97 ff.).

7 W. M. Mc Govern, *op. cit.*; R. Ghirshman, *Les Chionites-Hephthalites,* Cairo 1949; E. H. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks,* Cambridge 1913, p. 121 f.; Sten Konow, *Kharoshṭhī Inscriptions,* p. LIX f.; P. C. Bagchi, *Jl. Greater India Soc.* X, p. 107 ff.; Sir John Marshall, *Taxila,* Cambridge 1951, I, p. 76 ff.; B. Spuler, in Waldschmidt, Alsdorf, Spuler, Stange u. Kressler, *Geschichte Asiens,* München 1950.

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kistan south of the Oxus-Amu Darya). About 425 they set up their capital in the Badhaghis district near Herat and defeated the emperor Bahrām Gūr (420-38), advancing deep into the Sasanian empire. Bahrām Gūr, Yazdagird (438-57), Fīrōz (459-484), and Kubād (488-531) had to pay tribute to them, notwithstanding several futile attempts at regaining their independence. At last Khusrau Anūshirvān (531-579) succeeded in annihilating their power in 565, in alliance with the Northern Turks who in 552 had thrown off the Avar yoke and had founded their own empire.

In 465 the Ephthalites conquered the Kabul Valley and Gandhāra whither the Kidāra-Kushānas had fled after their defeat, and about 470 they began their attacks on the Gupta Empire. The Tunguse Mihirakula had undertaken his Indian raids in the last years of the peaceful and prosperous reign of Kumāragupta I (413-455), and had been able to overrun the empire practically unprepared. But this crisis led to a military reform, and at last Skandagupta (455-467) [8] succeeded in expelling Mihirakula, perhaps partly because, at the same time, the Ephthalites pressed on the western outskirts of Mihiragula's conquests. Then the dissensions between Skandagupta's weak successors opened the door to the invasion of the Ephthalites. By 500 most provinces had become practically independent. Soon afterwards the Ephthalite viceroy (Tegīn) Toramāṇa, already lord of the Panjab and Rājasthān, began the attack on the Gupta Empire. Malwa, Gujarat and much of northern and central India were occupied about 510. Subsequently (between 510 and 526) Toramāṇa's son and successor Mihiragula (II) was defeated in the East by Bhānugupta (or Narasiṁhagupta), and in the West by Yaśodharman Vishṇuvardhana, the Kalki of Puranic tradition [9], had to retire to Kashmir and died about 542. After the fall of the Ephthalite Empire in Turkistan in the year 565 its Indian dependency disintegrated.

The identity of the Ephthalites has also given occasion to many controversies, but now is more or less certain. Their name offers no clue, as they had assumed it merely from the founder of their empire, Hephthal I. They were a race of semi-nomads, Indo-Europeans, "blue-eyed and red-haired", not Iranians, but probably somehow related to the Tokharians. The royal images on their coins show a very peculiar type, a very high scull, a receding forehead and pronounced nose. Similar sculls have been discovered in cemeteries of the beginning of the Christian era south of Turfan [10], near the "homeland" of the White Huns, and

[8] R. N. Dandekar, *A History of the Guptas,* Poona 1941, R. C. Majumdar, *Ancient India,* Benares 1952.

[9] K. P. Jayaswal, *Ind. Ant.* XLVI, p. 145 ff.

[10] Remnants seem to have lived there also later. See A. von Le Coq, *Chotscho,* pls. 22, 28, 29.

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at Taxila [11]. Certain silverplates of Sasanian type, but evidently not Sasanian origin, depict the same type [12], and it can still be traced amongst the Tajiks of Eastern Turkistan. During their connection with the Huns and Avars, moreover, they had to some extent mixed with the latter. Their coins show the same mixture [13], generally Iranian type, semi-Sasanian costumes, Pahlavi and Tokharian legends, but with occasional Turkish titles. Primitive polyandrous nomads, they were in the opinion of Byzantine observers not as barbarian and destructive as the "Black Huns" of Attila. Though they wiped out the refined culture which the caravan cities of Central Asia had evolved under Kushān rule, they otherwise fitted quite well into the life of Bactria and Afghanistan. The average Afghan hill peasants and shepherds of the mountains have always lived on a primitive cultural level. The Scythian conquerors originally had been nomads. The Pahlava and Persian interlopers were likewise enthusiastic horsemen. The Yue-chi and Tokharians had been precursors of the Ephthalites [14]. The Kushān princes who had ruled over them, were of almost the same race [15]. Ephthalites, Kushāns, Persians, Scythians were sunworshippers. Buddhism, so strong in this country, was tolerated by them. Thus, the Ephthalites proved to be merely one more conqueror class imposing itself on a mixed society of a not very different character.

Without these affinities even the duration of the Ephthalite empire for one and a quarter centuries would be inexplicable. The original Ephthalite horde consisted of only ca. 100.000 people. During their spell of power they waged continuous wars with the Sasanians, Kidāra-Kushāns and Indians. These wars must have cost endless casualties. For both the Sasanians and the — now completely militarized — late Gupta Indians were brave and efficient warriors, and the advance of the Ephthalites was interrupted by many temporary, though serious reverses. Without recourse to the man power provided by the indigenous warlike tribes of their empire, the later successes of the Ephthalite armies would never have been possible. Their invasion of the Gupta Empire especially must have been undertaken mainly with non-Ephthalite troops. Thus, when at last they were decisively defeated, merely the Ephthalite command and organization in India crumbled away, giving place to another ruling class, the Gurjaras.

Here we are again at the crucial problem: Who were the Gurjaras? Before

11 See Marshall, *op. cit.* — The Ephthalite type is still frequently found among the Sikhs and Afghans.

12 F. Sarre, *Die Kunst des Alten Persiens,* Berlin 1923, pls. 109, 113.

13 Ghirshman, *op. cit.*

14 Southern and Northern Chionites.

15 The physiognomies, on the coins, of Toramāṇa and Mihiragula on the one hand, of Kanishka and Huvishka on the other are almost the same.

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attacking this question, it will be wise to study what other evidence we have regarding their character. And there we can make two interesting observations.

1) The Indian Gurjaras were not a homogeneous people at all. The most famous Gurjara kingdoms of the 7th century were those of Broach, Bhinmal-Jalor, and Mandor. And it is just in this area and in this very period that we find, as the principal foreign immigrants, people of Mongoloid type (probably the Tunguse-Pushyamitras) and a typical nomadic house ornament, horse-heads at the doors[16]. Further to the north, in Jaipur and Bikaner, we find a comparatively fair-skinned type of Gūjars, even today making cross-stitch embroideries, a technique hardly known elsewhere in India, but most common in the Caucasus, southern Russia and the Balkans[17]. Further to the north, the Gurjaras of the ancient Takkadeśa were so fair and good-looking that their women[18] were in great demand for princely and aristocratic zenanas. Their descendants apparently are found amongst the present Jats and Sikhs, though they do not call themselves Gurjaras anymore[19]. More to the east in Jaipur, Gwalior and Bundelkhand, in the areas once occupied by the Tomar and Kachchhapaghāta Rajputs who, too, are believed to be of Gurjara origin, we likewise find a tall, mesocephalous population and an ancient ornament style related to that brought by the Ostrogoths, Visigoths and Longobards to the early medieval Mediterranean. In the Panjab Himalaya, finally, Gūjars are small and dark-skinned[20], though their costume is half-Iranian. On the contrary, other people there, e.g. the Kuḷavīs and the inhabitants of Churah and Pangi, reveal features pointing to a relation with the Tokharians.

Linguistically the situation is similar. Mewārī, Mewātī, Dhūndhārī, Gūjarī and Pahāṛī form one closely related dialect group, of which Gūjarī and Western Pa-

16 This lends some probability to the claim of the Pratihāra rulers to Brahmanic descent (see Dasharatha Sharma, *Poona Orientalist,* II, p. 49 ff.). That an outsider imposed himself on a homogeneous clan or tribe, seems very improbable; that he could organize a medley of broken-up barbarians, appears plausible. Since the 8th century the Mongoloid type disappeared again from the monuments. The majority of Marwaris now is dolichocephalic.

17 H. Goetz, *Art and Architecture of Bikaner,* Oxford 1950; the only other example is the Kasuti work of the Karnatik *Cf.* K. S. Dongerkery, *The Romance of Indian Embroidery,* Bombay 1951; however, the claim that it is indigeneous, is not warranted.

18 G. Ferrand, *Voyage du Marchand Arabe Sulayman en Inde et en Chine en 851,* Paris 1922; read *Tāqī = Takkideśa,* instead of *Tāfī.*

19 The Jāts are generally regarded as immigrants of that time, identified with the Getae of Ptolemy(?), the Jatii of Pliny and Zanthi of Strabo (see Ibbetson, Maclagan and Rose, *op. cit.*; also James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rājasthān,* ed. W. Crooke, London 1920, I, p. 74, 127 f.; II, p. 1124. Other tribes to be mentioned here are the Gadaiyā-Gaddīs, Rabarīs, Meds (Mers), Kathis, Bhatis and Ballas, which today are found scattered over the whole of Western India.

20 Most of those still calling themselves Gūjars in the Himalaya are late Muslim immigrants from the plains (see Ibbetson, Maclagan and Rose, *op. cit.,* and *Gazetteers*).

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hāṛī are nearest to each other [21]. But it is an Indian language, though already of a frontier type. On the contrary the names of the early Gurjara and Pratihāra kings are claimed to be of a distinctly Scythian character [22]. In short: the name Gurjara-Gūjar covers tribes of frontier-Indian, Iranian-Scythian, Mongoloid and possibly even European origin.

2) The name *Gurjara* became common only in the 7th century and went out of use more and more after the 8th century. In the 5th and early 6th centuries only the Hūṇas are mentioned. In the 6th the Śūlikas [23] appear. First in hte 7th we meet the Gurjaras, although as a people settled in India for at least a hundred years, in the inscriptions of the Gurjaras of Broach and Nasik, Bāṇa's *Harshacharita* and Varāhamihira's *Bṛihatsaṁhitā* [24]. In the 8th we find the name connected with the Pratihāras of Bhinmal-Jalor and Mandor, and in the 7th-10th with the Takkadeśa kingdom of the Panjab. Since the establishment of the Pratihāras at Kanauj it was abandoned, and we hear subsequently only of various Rajput clans, though the name survived even then in certain subclans [25].

From all this it appears that in India the name Gurjara did not refer to a particular tribe or people, but was a collective appellation for various tribes of very different origin, all come to India with the Ephthalite invasion. As a conqueror generally does not care much for the various ethnic sub-groups of his subjects, we might expect that barbarian conquerors like the Ephthalites would have labelled all their subject auxiliaries with one common name. As names like Gurg, Gurj, Jurg, Gur, Garj are common in Afghanistan and Khurasan, once forming the core of the Ephthalite Empire, and as the Arab geographers and historians called the Gurjara-Pratihara Empire Gurj or Jurz, it seems possible that Gurj(ara) had been this common appellative. When that empire collapsed, this name was not yet in common use, as most barbarian tribes had not yet forgotten their original identity. As the chaos in northwestern India continued, when tribes were decimated, merged or deported, their original names soon became meaningless or of secondary importance, and thus *Gurjara* became the common appellative. But when these warriors became Hindus, they tried to get rid of a name stamping them as unclean barbarians, and it stuck only to the most backward groups, mainly

21 G. A. Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India,* IX, Calcutta 1916; V. A. Smith, *Ind. Ant.* XL, p. 85 ff.

22 H. D. Sankalia, *op. cit.*

23 See above; they seem to be of Scythian origin (Sogdians?).

24 Varāhamihira, however, applies the name only to the most backward groups in the North, West and Northwest.

25 Rajputs supposed to be of Gurjara origin are the Parihārs, Paramārs, Chauhāns. Kachhwāhas, Tomars, Chaulukyas, Chāvadas, etc.

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shepherds and cowherds. Thus it happened that the foreign name *Gurjara* (*Gūjar*) survived with those tribes most of which must be of Indian origin, probably Kāmbojas. For before these migrations the Kāmbojas had been a numerous and mighty tribe of horse-breeding Indian nomads in the Pamir-Hindukush area; later they disappeared, expelled by the Tokharians. And as there is no evidence for their annihilation, they must have been a great, though not the sole, contingent forming the Gurjaras [26]).

Thus it is not surprising that on a closer inspection the Gurjara settlement in the Brahmapura kingdom which the linguistic and historical evidence we adduced seemed to have established, again appears problematic. The "Gurjaras" again dissolve into many tribes who obviously had formed part of the great Gurjara movement [27], but of whom it is difficult to say how far they were real Gurjaras, Tokharians, or frontier Indians.

Varāhamihira merely mentions the Gurjaras amongst many other tribes of the "North-eastern" and "North-western Regions" [28]: Abhisāras, Anuviśvas, Bhallas, Chīnas, Ḍāmaras, Daradas, Dārvas, Gandharvas, Ghoshas, Kāśmīras, Kaunindas, Khāśas, Kīras, Kirātas, Kuchikas, Kunaṭhas, Pauravas, Sairindhas, Taṅganas, Paśupālas, Chīranivāsanas, Divishṭhas, Jaṭāsuras, Ekacharaṇas and Trinetras. How far these tribes really existed, and which of them inhabited the Brahmapura kingdom, we cannot ascertain. A number of these names evidently are semi-mythological, such as the Gandharvas or the Dwellers in the Sky, the Demons with Matted Hair, the Onefooted People, the Three-eyed People; and others are vague descriptions like Forest-dwellers, Wearers of Bark, and Cattleherdsmen. Others again are known to us, e.g. the Bhallas, Abhisāras (Hazara), Dards, Dārvas, Kāshmīrīs, Kaunindas, Ghoshas (Gaddi subgroup), Khāśas, Kīras, Kirātas, Kuchikas (inhabitants of Kucha in Eastern Turkistan), Kuṇaṭhas, Pauravas, Sai-

26 S. B. Chaudhuri, *Ind. Hist. Qu.* XXVI p. 118 f. Devapāla's claim to suzerainty over the Kāmbojas may merely refer to such Kāmbojas as had immigrated into the Panjab with the Ephthalites, but had not yet lost their identity in the Gurjara movement.

27 Already the *Bharata Nāṭyaśāstra* and Varāhamihira (G. A. Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India,* IX, 4) observe that the Khaśas of the Himalaya adopted the "Bahlika" language.

28 J. F. Fleet, *Ind. Ant.* XXII, p. 169 ff. See also E. Sachau, *Alberūnī's India,* London 1910, I, p. 299 ff. Varāhamihira's geography is somewhat confused. The centre of his topography is Marudeśa (Marwar), but apparently not Bhinmal, rather some place west of it. Moreover, in his classification the Northern Region is in the Northnorthwest, and the Northeastern in the Northnortheast. Kulūta and some other places are quoted repeatedly, in the Northern or Northwestern, and also in the Northeastern Region. In the case of tribes such a repetition may merely mean that groups of the same tribe were living over a vast area, but in the case of countries his knowledge sometimes must have been vague. The introduction of mythological names like the Country of the Dead, the Dwellers of the Sky, indicates hearsay information. Notwithstanding all this, the *Bṛihatsaṁhitā* is an invaluable source; but it has to be used with considerable caution.

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rindhas, Taṅganas. But many of them were inhabitants of other parts of the Himalaya, and we can neither be sure whether Varāhamihira might not have copied some of these names from earlier sources. The tribes which may be connected with the Brahmapura kingdom are, besides the Gurjaras and Śūlikas, the Taṅganas, Ghoshas, Kulūtas and Khaśas, possibly also the Sairindhas and Kunaṭhas. That these people were barbarians, is evident from Hsüan-tsang's description: "Brahmapura (Po-lo-hih-mo-pu-lo) has a rich flourishing population. The people have rough ways, they care little for learning and pursue gain; there are five Buddhist monasteries, but very few Brethren; there are above ten Deva temples, and the sectarians live pell-mell" [29]. And the only certain conclusion which we can draw from all this evidence is that all of them probably may have formed part of the host of restless frontier barbarians, known under the general label *Gurjara.*

For ascertaining the role of these various ethnic groups in the history of Brahmapura-Chamba we shall have to examine the ethnological and archaeological evidence still available on the spot. However, in doing so we have to exclude, at least to some degree, the very population of the Brahmor district. For as we have already seen, the military and priestly aristocracy of Brahmor had been deported from Kanauj to Brahmor by Lalitāditya of Kashmir about A.D. 733, as the first step towards the disintegration of the original Gurjara state. And the Gaddis themselves came even later, occupying a then thinly populated out-district of the early Chamba kingdom. The real remnants of the old Gurjara kingdom must be sought in areas which were no centres of political power, and the population structure of which has since then been hardly disturbed, e.g. Churah and Pangi in the west, and Kulu [30] and the Simla Hills in the east.

Of course, the original social and cultural structure has since long disappeared, at least so far as it conflicted with the conscious ideals of Hindu society. But as always in such cases, certain groups, institutions and customs adjust themselves only superficially, and others come to be regarded as merely of local character, nobody feeling them to be remnants of a barbarian past. Thus they offer most valuable information to the ethnologist, historian and archaeologist who approaches them with modern methods.

Now, in these Himalayan valleys we can easily distinguish four main cultural

29 Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels,* I, p. 329.

30 Kulu might likewise be regarded as a historically disturbed area. But it is far less so than one would expect. From the plains it is sufficiently protected by the mountain forests of Upper Kangra, Bangahal, Suket and Mandi. Most invasions came from the Tibetan side; but the Tibetans found the climate too hot, controlling the valley for several centuries, but never settling down, though Tibetan blood has infiltrated into the population, especially in the northern half of the valley.

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strata [31]. The first two are represented by the aboriginals. The Kolīs who form ca. 30 pct. of the population, have since long been degraded to low-castes. They appear under various caste names, such as Kolī, Hālī, Sipī, Chamār, Dūmnā, Barwala, Megh, Darain, Rehāra, Sarāra, Lohār, Bhatwāl, Dhaugrī (Dāgī), Chanāl, etc. Several of these names are well-known to us, either as generic terms, e.g. Chanāl [Chaṇḍāla], Chamār, or as names of primitive jungle tribes, e.g. Kolī or Megh, or as professional names which always had been outside the pale of respectable society, e.g. Lohār (blacksmith). Not much higher stand the Kanets, the descendants of the ancient Kunindas (Kulindas), representatives of the South-Himalayan Mongoloids (Khāśas, Khāsh), until recently forming a numerous class (ca. half the population in the eastern areas, a quarter in the western) of agricultural serfs. However, division lines are difficult to draw. Illegitimate blood mixture and social degradation have almost wiped out the physical differences between them and the social groups next higher up the social ladder. In their costume and ways of life they have likewise adjusted themselves to the latter. But probably they were the original carriers of the Devī, Nāga and demon cult, still so strong in the inner Hindu Himalaya.

At the other end of the social ladder is the old court aristocracy which had adopted the Mughal-inspired costumes, customs and religious ideas of the Rajputs of the outer hills. They are mainly Rajputs and Brahmins, on the average no more than ca. 8 pct. of the population, in the inner valleys even much less. Some of them immigrated in recent times, others were refugeees from the Muslim conquest of northern India about the turn of the 12th to the 13th century; hardly any have a genuine pedigree older than the 8th-10th centuries.

The groups of interest to us are the intermediate classes, the Ṭhākurs, Rāṇās and Rāṭhīs. Not only are they the most important social groups, as they represent the overwhelming majority of the landed aristocracy and the backbone of agriculture; they are also historically the most interesting. They claim to be *Kshatriyas,* but nothing certain is known of their history, except that everywhere they are mentioned as the earliest landholders and local chieftains, like the medieval knights of Europe, petty rulers over estates of a few villages at the utmost, involved in endless feuds with each other, submitting to Rajput princes whenever forced to do so, and then serving in their armies, but reasserting their independence at the first opportunity. Most of them were reduced as late as the 17th century, a number retained their independence along the various state frontiers up

31 See the various Panjab States Gazetteers; Kangra District Gazetteer; Kumaon Gazetteers; Atkinson, *op. cit.*; Ibbetson, Maclagan and Rose, *op. cit.*; A. Cunningham, *A. S. R.,* XIV, p. 125 ff., 1882, etc.

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to the end of the 18th century, and only in Lahul, Bashahr and some other out-of-the way districts they have survived until recent years. The dividing line between these groups is difficult to draw. The Rāṇās are evidently identical with the old Rājānakas, the court aristocracy of pre-Rajput times. Inscriptions mention them occasionally as early as the 7th, oftener after the 10th-11th century. The Ṭhākurs are more difficult to define. The name means 'lord', and may originally have applied to any petty chieftain or his descendants, whether he had been a successful interloper from the lower classes or an immigrant from outside, the Indian plains, or Tibet. Ṭhākurs of Tibetan origin are well known to us from Lahul, Kulu and Spiti; on the average, however, their descent may be not so different from that of the Rāṇās. The Rāṭhīs, finally, do not belong to the aristocracy, but are yeomen agriculturists. As their name, i.e. Rāshṭrīya, i.e. people of the kingdom, implies, they, too, belonged to the ruling class, though only in its inferior ranks. In other words, the Rāṇās and Rāṭhīs, and a good portion of the Ṭhākurs are the remnants of the ruling class which preceded the Rajputs and Brahmins, but superseded the older primitive Kolī and Khaśa tribes. Historically, they must, therefore, be identical with the people who ruled over the Western Himalaya in the period between the fall of the Gupta Empire and the development of Rajput society under the Pratihāras, and, therefore, be the descendants of the "Gurjaras" of the Brahmapura kingdom.

Now it is interesting that the general impression of the population of Churah and Pangi in Chamba, Kulu, Mandi and the Simla Hills up to Chaunsa Bawar in Kumaon is very much the same. In Kulu perhaps the varieties are greatest, from the purest Mongolian and Tibetan to Indian gipsy and South- and Central European types [32]. The last-mentioned resemble mainly Nether Bavaria, Lotharingia, Eastern France and Southern Belgium types. In Churah they resemble to some degree the Tajiks, Hunzas, Kafirs and Wakhanis of the Hindukush [33]. In Pangi a strong admixture of Tibetan blood is obvious, in Mandi, Suket and the Simla hills a Khaśa strain is discernible. The Chaunsa Bawar people resemble the Dogras in the West, many of whom look almost like Castilian Spaniards.

The costume [34] differs also fundamentally from that of the Indian plains,

32 Ibbetson, Maclagan and Rose, *op. cit.*, II, p. 460.

33 G. Scott Robertson, *The Kafirs of the Hindukush*, London 1896; M. A. Stein, *Ruins of Khotan*, p. 32 ff.; and, *Ancient Khotan*, Oxford 1907, I, p. 19 ff.; Lord Curzon, *The Pamirs and the Source of the Oxus*; Filippo de Filippi, *The Italian Expedition to the Himalaya, Karakorum and Eastern Turkistan*, London 1932, p. 29; Rolf Bircher, *Hunsa*, 1952; Olufsen, *Through the Unknown Pamirs*, London 1904, p. 217 ff.; K. E. von Ujfalvy, *Aus dem Westlichen Himalaya*, Leipzig 1884.

34 For descriptions cp. the various gazetteers. The present analysis is mainly based on first-hand observations on the spot. See also J. Ph. Vogel, *Antiquities* I, fig. 21.

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Tibet, Persia and Afghanistan. The male dress is a wide shirt or coat reaching down to the knees, closed crosswise over the breast, and kept together by a felt belt [35]. Over it often a felt cape is worn. On the head there is a flat cap with a narrow, vertical or rounded rim. Except for the cap, this costume does not differ much from that of the Gaddis of Brahmor and Kangra or from that of the Dards, Baltis, Hunzas, and the Kafirs of the Hindukush [36]. Much more interesting is the female costume (fig. 1). Over the shirt a "skirt" is worn, consisting of a front and a back piece, the latter overlapping the first on both sides. The upper body is likewise covered by two similar pieces, kept together by annular brooches (fibulas). Today, the Indian *cholī* (brassière) or a sleeveless sewn jacket or vest are worn instead. The same costume is found among the Gūjars, as far as they have not yet adopted Panjabi or Kashmiri dress, in Pangi, Kulu and in the Simla Hills. The cap of Gūjarī women has a pointed tip hanging down on the neck; women in Kulu and further east wear a scarf in western Gypsy manner.



Fig. 1

The two-piece skirt is different from the coat and apron of Tibetan women. The cap, on the other hand, is found amongst the Hunza women of the Hindukush, the Kurdish women of Persia and the Circassian women of the Caucasus. In the past this female flat cap [37] can be traced among the "Iranians" of Turfan [38], in Persian manuscripts of the Mongol period [39] and in medieval Europe (13th century). Probably it goes back to an East-Iranian prototype, as it is a common head-dress of the Bactrians and even of the Persian kings on Achaemenian reliefs [40]. The two-piece skirt is found also on the reliefs of the old fountain stones of Churah [41]. It is not known anywhere else

35 This costume is common in Kushāna sculpture both of the Gandhāra and Mathurā school (for the latter e.g. Mathura Museum F. 38 and Lucknow Museum B. 147). It occurs occasionally also in Central Asia, e.g. at Turfan (see Le Coq, *Chotscho,* pl. 38b). It is fundamentally identical with that of the Mughals and Mughal-inspired Hindus, Rajputs, Sikhs, Marathas, etc. The Rajput dress with pointed rim occurs already in the Hadda stucco reliefs.

36 It appears in Kushāna sculpture, e.g. in the Bacchanalian group from Pali Khera, Mathurā.

37 As a male headdress it is common in Nepal; and in olden times it seems to have been the headdress of the Indo-Scythian Kshatrapas of Western India; and from it the present "Gandhi" cap seems to have developed.

38 A. von Le Coq, *Chotscho,* pl. 13.

39 F. R. Martin, *Miniature Painting and Painters of Persia, India and Turkey,* London 1912, II, pl. 28; from Khurasan, the area of former Gurjara settlements? A.D. 1310.

40 Perrot and Chipiez, *History of Art in Persia,* London 1892, figs. 190, 191, 199, 200, 206; G. Contenau, *Manuel d'Archéologie Orientale,* Paris 1931, III, fig. 869, 870.

41 J. Ph. Vogel, *Antiquities,* I, pl. XXXIII, fig. 27.

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in India nor in Iran; the nearest relatives, curiously enough, are the costumes unearthed from prehistoric tombs in Denmark [42] and Ireland. Also the annular or penannular brooches (fibulas used for pinning together the two pieces covering the upper body are otherwise unknown in India, but recur in ancient Scandinavia, Scotland, Ireland, France and Berber North-Africa [43].

The religious situation also is abnormal. There is a host of curious godlings, such as Sindhu-Bīr, Mundhlik, Mahāsu, Jamlū, Narsing, Siddhas, etc. whose antecedents are difficult to trace. But some figures dominate. In all the Himalayan valleys [44] the cult of the terrible mountain goddess prevails, very often in heterodox forms of *yakshīs* or *rākshasīs,* but also in her orthodox aspect as Chāmuṇḍā (iconographically as Durgā Mahishamardinī or Kālī). The latter form, however, is a product of historical times, as almost all Chāmuṇḍā temples appear to be foundations of princes from the late Gupta period to the last century. On closer investigation, however, these temples also prove to be nothing but modernized old sanctuaries, often connected with some sacred tree, and not seldom the name, even some idols reveal the earlier, pre-Hindu cult which seems to have been originally Khaśa [45]. Sacred trees, female goddesses and snakes can be traced on the early Audumbara coins.

The other aboriginal cult is that of the snake gods and goddesses, the Nāgas [46]. Whereas today in the plains [47] the snakes are mainly earth deities, in the mountains they preside over rivers, fountains, lakes, rain and clouds. In Kulu, Mandi, Suket [48] and the Simla Hills they have often also been Hinduized as "Ṛishis" [49].

42 J. J. A. Worsaae, *The Industrial Arts of Denmark up to the Danish Conquest of England,* London 1882. Also Ibbetson, etc., *op. cit.,* p. 460, point out the similarity of the Kulu costume to various aspects of the Scotch national dress.

43 J. J. A. Worsaae, *op. cit.*; H. Hildebrand, *The Industrial Arts of Scandinavia in the Pagan Times,* London 1882; M. Stokes, *Early Christian Art in Ireland,* London 1894; G. Baldwin Brown, *The Arts and Crafts of our Teutonic Forefathers,* London 1910.

44 H. A. Rose, *Ind. Ant.* XXXVI, p. 33 ff., 253 ff., 1907; *Panjab States Gazetteers*; *Kangra District Gazetteer*; P. D. Baburao Sunu, *Jwālāmukhī Parvato Jwālāmukhī Devī vā,* (*Karmarkar Comm. Vol.* Poona 1948, p. 149 ff.); D. F. Newall, *J.A.S.B.* XXXV, p. 219 ff.; G. Dalziel, *Ind. Ant.* XXIV, p. 220 ff.; B. R. Beotra, *J.A.S.B.* n.s. XXVII, p. 165 ff.; Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit., passim*; S. K. Chatterjee, *Kirāta-Jana-Kṛiti,* Calcutta 1951; and own observations.

45 At least the cult of the terrible mother goddess demanding human sacrifices and often also orgiastic rituals can be traced over the whole area originally occupied by Khaśas, from Khotan and Gandhāra to Kāmākhya in Assam, Bengal and Orissa. The very name of Pārvatī, the mountain goddess, points to the Himalaya, the "father" of Pārvatī, whereas that of Vindhyavāsinī, the "resident of the Vindhya mountains", is distinguished from Pārvatī. Tree cult is still known. See Ibbetson-Maclagan-Rose, *Glossary,* I, p. 135 ff., 318 ff.

46 *Chamba Gazetteer,* p. 184 ff.; Ibbetson etc., *Glossary,* I, p. 143 ff.; J. Ph. Vogel, *Indian Serpent Lore,* London 1926, chapter VII.

47 W. Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India,* London 1896.

48 B. R. Beotra, *op. cit.*

49 A. F. D. Harcourt, *The Himalayan Districts of Koolloo, Lahoul and Spiti,* London 1871.

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Probably this may represent the Kolī layer of South-Himalayan religion.

Śivaism became common at least in the 6th-7th century but first in a Kushāna form (Śūlapāṇi). Orthodox Vaishṇavism was introduced not before the 8th-10th centuries, Sūrya [50] and Kārttikeya [51] worship in the 6th-8th centuries, and the name of Kṛishṇa became common in the 12th century (though merely as an epithet of Vishṇu). The cult of Kṛishṇa Gopāla-Vaṁsīdhar appeared in the 16th century [52], but did not come into fashion until the 18th century. Rāma worship (Raghubīr, Raghunāth) became the royal cult by the middle of the 17th century.

In Churah the fountain-stones of the 11th and 12th centuries reveal a quite exceptional pantheon [53]. The highest god of heaven and of justice is Varuṇa. By his side there appear female water goddesses, not of the fountains, but of the rivers [54], in one case at least identified with the holy rivers (Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Sindhu and its tributaries) of Hinduism [55]. As third deity in Churāh, though not on the fountain stones, a godling on horseback, Gūgā, appears, but he remains rather shadowy [56]. Now, Varuṇa had been the Indian god of heaven and justice only in Ṛigvedic times (ca. 1200-800 B.C.), later on to be reduced to the position of a *digpāla,* one of the eight guardians of the four principal and four secondary points of the compass [57]. The river goddesses generally likewise played an important part mainly in Vedic religion, and even the cult of Gaṅgā, Yamunā (and Sarasvatī) went out of fashion as early as the Pratihāra period (ca. 9th-10th centuries) [58]. Gūgā [59]has never become an orthodox Hindu deity; he is, however, a common village godling also in Rājasthān, and though identified with one, if not two semi-historical Chauhān heroes, seems originally to have been a Gurjara deity. In other words, the cult of Churah up to the Muslim invasion had been a remnant of a very early stage of Indian religion. It should be observed that in ancient Churah other indigenous cults were absent, even those of Chāmuṇḍā and

50 Guṁ image, see below, p. 60.

51 Masrūr, and Tur (Vogel, *Antiquities,* p. 174, pl. XIX*b*).

52 Vaṁśīgopāl Temple, Chamba, A.D. 1595.

53 Vogel, *Antiquities*; H. Goetz, *Proc. 6th Indian History Congress, Aligarh 1943,* p. 175 ff.; and *Indian Culture,* XIII, p. 122 ff.

54 Ibbetson etc., *Glossary,* II. p. 135.

55 Vogel, *Antiquities,* p. 216 ff., pls. XXXI-XXXII, also p. 232, pl. XXXIII.

56 J. Ph. Vogel, *Catalogue of the Bhuri Singh Museum,* Calcutta 1909, p. 6 (A 32); other figures on horseback at Nagar in Kulu and at Bhojpur in Suket.

57 In this aspect also in the Thākurdwāra of Masrur, 8th century, see B. Bhattacharya, *Indian Images,* I, p. 418.

58 J. Ph. Vogel, *Études Asiatiques,* II, p. 385 ff.

59 A. Cunningham, *A.S.R.,* XIV, 1882, p. 81 ff.; Ibbetson, Maclagan and Rose, *Glossary,* II, p. 171 ff.; W. Crooke, *Ind. Ant.,* XXIV, p. 49 ff.; *Kangra District Gaz.,* I, p. 102; *Chamba State Gaz.,* p. 183. Gūgā appears first in the 7th century, the Ghauhāns in the 8th-9th. The hero Gūgā Chauhān belongs to the 12th-13th century. The cult has, thus, originally nothing to do with the hero.

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of Nāgas. It is true, that an interesting Chāmuṇḍā temple stands at Devi-ri Kothi; but it was founded only as late as 1754 [60]. The orthodox Hindu deities, Śiva, Vishṇu, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa and Brahmā, are represented also on a few fountain stones [61] and images [62]. But these "orthodox" fountain stones and idols were erected by local chieftains in frequent contact with the courts of Chamba, Balor and Kashmir; and the Padri Pass is on an old main route through the hills from Kashmir to the Gangetic plains. These monuments, therefore, do not represent the religion of the local people, but that of the more "international" ruling families.

Outside Churah only in Paṅgi something of this religion has survived, but mixed with the indigenous cult of the mother goddess. In the other areas of the old Brahmapura kingdom no vestiges have hitherto been traced. Fountain stones occur also in Chamba, Brahmor, Chatrarhi [63], Basu, etc. and even in Kulu [64], but are of no special interest.

On the other hand, the cult of Sūrya seems to have played quite an important role in olden times. The veneration of the sun as a prominent deity is generally regarded as Iranian (Mithra, Helios, Sol invictus) and has in India been connected with the Indo-Scythians [65]. In any case the oldest images of Sūrya, in Scythian dress, belong to the Kushāna school of Mathurā [66]. But the Purāṇas [67], the still existing sun temples and most Sūrya images rather point to the late Gupta and Gurjara-Pratihāra period (6th-10th centuries) as the Golden Age of solar worship in Northern India [68]. It is, therefore, not surprising that one of the most interesting Sūrya images (6th century) has been found at Guṁ [69], halfway

60 *Antiquities,* p. 207.

61 Sālhī fountain stone of rājānaka Ludrapala, A.D. 1170, *ibid.,* p. 216 f., pls. XXXI-XXXII. Sai fountain stone, reign of Ajayapāla, A.D. 1169 (?), (*ibid.,* p. 232 ff., pl. XXXIII); Sīya fountain stone, 1st year of Āsaṭa, (*ibid.,* p. 200 ff., pls. XXIII-XXVII).

62 Nārāyaṇa image of rājānaka Nāgapāla, A.D. 1159-61 (*ibid.,* p. 207, pl. XXIX); from Padrī Pass (E. van Ujfalvy, *op. cit.* p. 107, figs. 36-37).

63 J. Ph. Vogel, *Catalogue of the Bhuri Singh Museum,* Calcutta 1909; *Antiquities,* fig. 13.

64 A. F. D. Harcourt, *op. cit.,* p. 362; A. H. Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet,* I, p. 15, 1914.

65 J. Scheftelowitz, *Acta Orientalia* XI, p. 293 ff., 1933.

66 J. Ph. Vogel, *La Sculpture de Mathurā,* Brussels 1930, pl. XXXIII, XXXVIIIa.

67 R. C. Hazra, *Studies in the Puranic Records,* Dacca 1940, p. 167; D. R. Patil, *Cultural History from the Vāyu Purāṇa,* Poona 1946, p. 191 f. G. R. Bhandarkar, *Vaishṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems,* pp. 153, 155.

68 On Ephthalites, see Ghirshman, *op. cit.,* Guptas, Maukharis and Pushyabhūtis see N. K. Bhattasali, *Iconography* etc., 1929, p. 165 ff.; Panjab: Cunningham, *A. S. R.* V, 114 ff. The Telī-kā-Mandir, Gwalior Fort, was a temple of Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa; the Mārtāṇḍ temple in Kashmir founded by Lalitāditya-Muktāpīḍa, A.D. 725-56. Pratihāra sun temples and Kuṇḍs are found over Northern and Central India, Rājasthān and Gujarāt. The sun temple of Modhera was founded in the same period, though most of its structure is later.

69 B. Ch. Bhattacharya, *Indian Images,* I, pl. 18, Simla 1921; J. Hackin et J. Carl, *Recherches archéologiques au Col de Khâir-khāna près de Kâbul,* Paris, 1936, p. 19, fig. H.

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between Brahmor and Chamba. Though in the Gupta style, its costume is Sasanian-Persian, and its conception is closely related to that of the sun god excavated at the Khairkhana Pass near Kabul (Sasano-Kushān style). In Kumaon [70] Barā-Āditya (Sūrya) temples are common, e.g. at Katamal or Kheti Khan. But, as in Rajputana, also in the Himalaya, the Sūrya cult was in the 10th century superseded and absorbed by that of Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa (= Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa).

The so-called folk art represents a similar and even more interesting aspect. Folk art rarely is an independent creation. Generally it represents the simplified and stylized residuum of some former upper-class art, and in this respect it proves a most valuable substitute where historical or archaeological evidence fails. The folk art of the Panjab Himalaya is not of a uniform type, but belongs to at least two distinct groups which, however, prove closely related when seen in the historical perspective.

The first of these is the folk art of Kulu such as it survives mainly in the wood carvings of the local temples [71]. Their plan and the general lay-out of their façades go back to later Gupta art. But though the Gupta motifs can still be discerned, they are interpreted in a very curious manner, and are intermixed with motifs of non-Indian origin. All scroll-work dissolves into hammer (pelta) or "mushroom"-shaped leaves, carved in a very peculiar, oblique cutting technique unknown in Indian art, but quite common in the Muslim art of Iran and Iraq under the later ʿAbbasid caliphs and the Saljuqs [72]. Obviously quite a number of the other motifs belong to this Muslim art of the 8th-11th centuries [73]. But such a derivation does not work out satisfactorily.

First of all, in the Kulu decorations as well as in part of those from Churah [74], quite a number of motifs appear which obviously form an integral part of the same decorative system, but are unknown in Muslim art, mainly spirals, plaitwork, the "tree-of-life", animals, especially "soul birds" and snakes, horsemen, etc. On

70 D. R. Sahni, *A.S.R.* 1921-22, p. 50 f. Further examples two Sūrya images at Bajaura in Kulu, the Sūrajmukha Liṅgam at Brahmor and the Markulā Devī Temple at Udaipur, Lahul, originally dedicated to Sūrya; an exceptional late image from Baijnāth, ca. A.D. 1240.

71 Based mainly on my own observations on the spot. I hope to publish a more detailed analysis of the art of Kulu in the near future.

72 J. Strzygowski, *Altai-Iran und Völkerwanderung,* Leipzig 1917, figs. 82-88, 158; E. Diez, *Die Kunst der Islamischen Völker,* Berlin-Neubabelsberg 1917, fig. 283; E. Kühnel, *Die Islamische Kunst* (Springer, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte,* VI, 1929), figs. 366, 384, 387; M. S. Dimand, *Handbook of Mohammedan Decorative Arts,* New York 1930, fig. 39, 59, 133; *Handbook, Fogg Art Museum,* Cambridge, Mass. 1936, p. 216.

73 Strzygowski, *op. cit.,* fig. 82, 83, 88 (minor motif), 164; E. Kühnel, *op. cit.,* figs. 384, 412, 444; Shoolman-Slatkin, *Enjoyment of Art in America,* Philadelphia-New York 1942, pl. 220; *Handbook, Seattle Art Museum,* pl. 15.

74 Vogel, *Antiquities, I, pls.* XXI, XXVII, XXXIV, XXXVII, fig. 27.

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the other hand, the same style in ᶜAbbasid and Saljuq art has no roots in the preceding Muslim art and has been recognized as a barbarian intruder from Central Asia [75]. As the ᶜAbbasid power was based mainly on the support of the Persians, especially of the population of Khorasan and Turkistan, and as the most important Iranian dynasties of the post-ᶜAbbasid and Saljuq period had likewise flourished there, there are strong reasons for the surmise that this style must have originated in Khorasan and southern Turkistan. As we have already seen that Khorasan and southern Turkistan seem to have been the homeland of at least part of the Indian Gurjaras, it looks very much as if these two interrelated style groups in the folk art of Kulu merely represent two successive phases of the same art tradition, one brought by the Gurjara immigrants of the 6th-7th century to the Western Himalaya, the other imported by the Ghaznavids [76] into the Panjab, and from there infiltrated into the Hindu Himalaya, where it was accepted because of its close relationship to the local art already customary.

On the fountain stones of Churah and Pangi we likewise find motifs taken from contemporary Hindu art [77]; but the barbarian style trends and decorative motifs predominate (fig. 2). However, the latter are somewhat different. The leading ornament is the simple or reduplicated plaitwork [78], such as we know it from a peculiar group of early medieval European art, i.e. the architectural decoration of the Ostrogoths, Visigoths and Longobards immigrating into the disintegrating Roman Empire from the South Russian steppes, and of contemporaneous Byzantine art, especially the Hagia Sophia at Constantinople and the churches of Ravenna [79]. By the side of this plaitwork also the obliquely cut hammer-scroll work of Kulu is occasionally found [80], and also the "soul-birds", "tree-of-life" motifs [81]. The human figures, whether Varuṇa or other gods, or the deceased, either on foot or on horseback, are represented in the same primitive manner,

[75] J. Strzygowski, *op. cit.* As in 1917 the Tokharian problem was still unknown, Strygowski, though fundamentally on the right way, tentatively called the whole style group "Saka".

[76] Strzygowski, *op. cit.*, figs. 171-173; *Cambridge History of India,* III: Turks and Afghans, 1928, pl. I, fig. 1 ("G̲haznī Doors", Agra); *A.S.R.* 1906-07, pls. L-LI.

[77] Vogel, *Antiquities,* pls. XXI, XXVII, XXXI, XXXIV.

[78] *Ibid.,* pls. XXI, XXVII, XXXIV, XXXVII, and figs. 11, 19, 27.

[79] Margaret Stokes, *Early Christian Art in Ireland,* London 1894; H. B. Walters, *The Art of the Romans,* London 1911, pl. 47; M. Dieulafoy, *Art in Spain and Portugal,* London 1913, fig. 157; R. P. Hinks, *Catalogue of Greek, Etruscan and Roman Paintings and Mosaics in the British Museum,* London 1913, p. 58 ff., ca. figs. 73-89, 92-95, 110-138, 145 f., 151 (originally Gaul, since Nero in Rome, since 3rd century A.D. in the whole Roman Empire); J. Strzygowski, *op. cit.* figs. 68-70, 159-160.

[80] Vogel, *Antiquities,* I, pls. XXI, XXVII, XXXIV, XXXVII. Also in late Gandhāra reliefs, e.g. a Flight of the Bodhisattva, from Malakand, Arch. S. Photo Album, N.W. Frontier Prov., XII, no. 2178.

[81] *ibid.,* pls. IV, XXVII, XXXIV, XXXV fig. 11; Ḍaṛwār (Tīsā) fountain stone; Kiḷār stone.

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likewise reminiscent of Tentonic sculptures of the Migration period, such as they appear on certain Visigothic, Frankish and Lowgobard reliefs.

How far these motifs occur outside Kulu, Churah and Pawgi, it is difficult to state, in the absence of any research work on the subject. In Mandi and

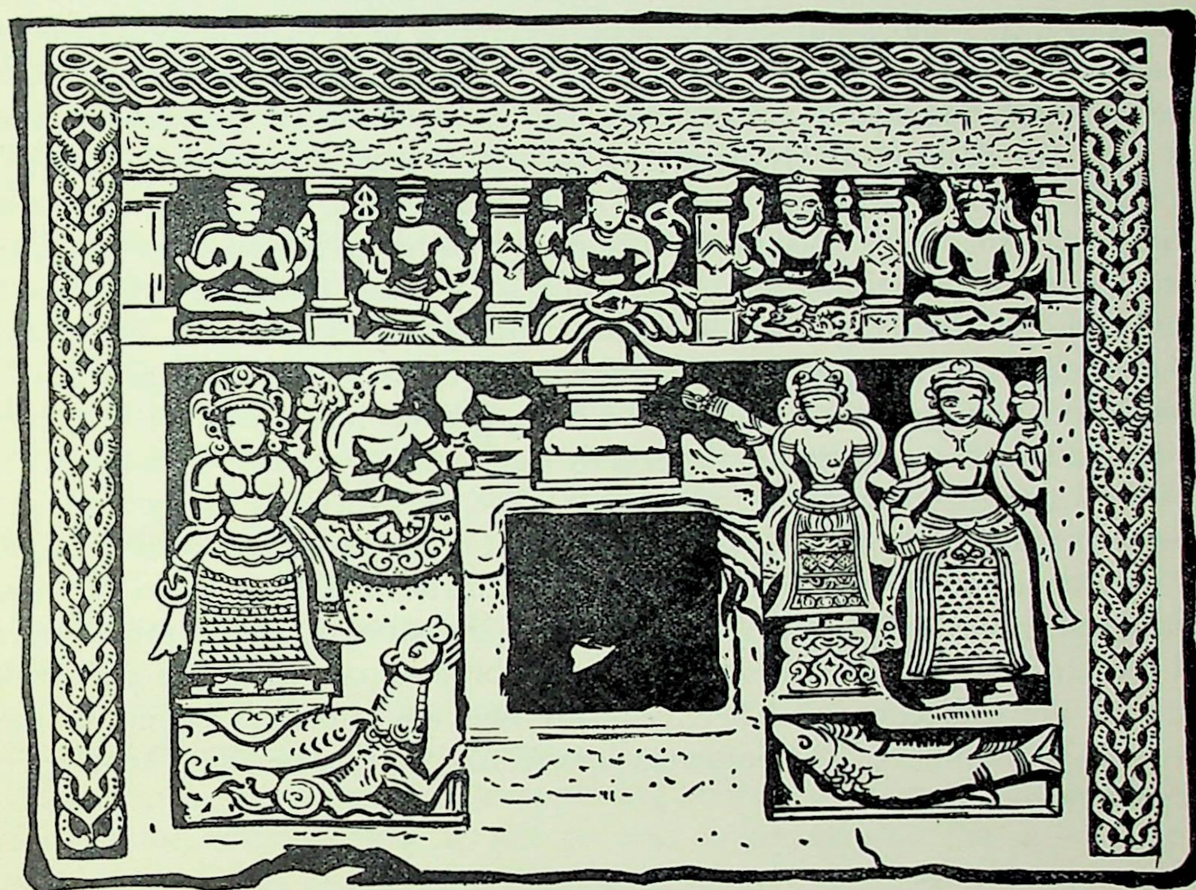


Fig. 2

Suket [82] quite a number of them can be traced, less apparently in Chamba proper and Brahmor; in Lahul they appear in the wood carvings of the Markula Devī temple [83], in the Simla States they probably were likewise known as far as some occasional observations permit conclusions.

Even outside the Panjab Himalaya these foreign art motifs are not wanting [84].

82 Mainly in the Triloknāth and Sītalā temples at Old Mandi, and the Asambhnāth Mahādeo, north of Purana Nagar, Suket.

83 In the woodcarvings of the last reconstruction of the Markulā Devī temple this is not surprising, as tradition ascribes it to the master who built the Hiṛmā Devī temple at Manali in Kulu, and as historical and art-critical evidence confirms this tradition. But plaitwork motifs appear also in the 11th century shrine façade, mainly a late Hindu-Kashmiri creation.

84 These problems, too, will be discussed with more evidence in a separate study.

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The plaitwork, transformed into a long garland of Nāgas, is found in late Gupta, Pratihāra and Kachchhapaghāta temples of north-eastern Rājasthān (Osian, Amber, Gwalior, Jageśwar in Kumaon); and as a complicated mass of intertwisted snakes in Jaisalmer, Southern Marwar, Gujarat, Sorath (Saurāshṭra), Malwa, and even Orissa. In many Pratihāra and early Solaṅkī temples the *gavāksha* motif, reduced to a continuous surface ornament, becomes a mere band design, without any similarity to the arched windows from which it had developed, but of the same type as the inscription friezes on Muslim mosques. In the Kachhwāha temples (e.g. the Sāsbahū at Gwalior) the decorative sculptures likewise lose all modelling, being transformed into a flat black-and-white pattern by the drill cutting out a shadowed background behind a light-exposed, but otherwise flat foreground; such an approach, in utter contrast to Indian tradition, is elsewhere found mainly in the Hagia Sophia at Constantinople, at Ravenna, in Byzantine-Syrian churches and at the Qaṣr-al Mushatta in Jordan [85], but there also represents a barbarian innovation. Finally the birds (parrots and peacocks), the tree-of-life, the horsemen, etc. recur, all, in early Rajput art (16th-early 17th century).

From where these techniques and motifs came, it is difficult to say. For they are not characteristic of the traditional art of Central Asia. Curiously enough, the only area where they were at home, is prehistoric Europe, especially the Bronze and Iron Age Celtic civilization [86]. Here the spiral ornament, the hammer and mushroom-shaped leaf or arabesque, the obliquely cut relief, the plaitwork ornament are indigenous [87]. The tree-of-life and the soul-birds belong to the earliest Balkan tradition. The horseman figures, of course, were bound to develop in any nomadic art [88].

85 Strzygowski, *op. cit.*, figs. 70, 187, 188. Ch. Diehl, *Manuel d'Art Byzantin,* Paris 1926.

86 H. Hildebrand, *The Industrial Arts of Scandinavia in the Pagan Times,* London 1892, fig. 72 (Celtic); Margaret Stokes, *op. cit.*; G. Baldwin Brown, *The Arts and Crafts of our Teutonic Forefathers,* London 1910, figs. 112, 113, 122; E. A. Parkyn, *An Introduction to the Study of Prehistoric Art,* London 1915, figs. 278, 282, 292, 294, 295, 310, 314, pl. 16, 3 and 4; Pijoan, *History of Art,* London 1933, II, figs. 262-265 (Ireland); R. P. Hinks, *op. cit.* fig. 109; Stuart Piggott and Glyn E. Daniel, *Ancient British Art,* Cambridge 1951, figs. 39, 40-42, 44, 48. — Hinks calls the hammer or mushroom-shaped ornament *Pelta* or double-axe and derives it from Minoan art; it was also common in Carolingian and Romanesque art.

87 Another striking parallel is the door knobs of Kulu temples, identical with those of Romanesque Europe.

88 For links with India and the Far East, cp., besides Kunst, *op. cit.,* South Eastern Europe and Central Asia: E. H. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks,* Cambridge 1913, figs. 20, 73-75, 123, 181, 183, 184; Vera K. Ostoia, *Bull. Metropolitan Museum of Art,* January 1953; J. Strzygowski, *op. cit.* figs. 22, 24-26, 28, 29, 38, 40, 42, 58, 62; E. H. Minns, *Art of the Northern Nomads,* London 1942 (Pazyryk find). — Far East (Chou period, to some degree, but mainly Han and T'ang dynasties): L. Bachhofer, *Short History of Chinese Art,* London 1946, figs. 35, 37-39; *Ausstellung*

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Such a link between the folk art of the Brahmapura kingdom, as it survives in Kulu and Mandi-Suket, Churah and Pangi, and in a lesser degree in the Simla hills and even Lahul, with prehistoric Celtic Europe, may seem far-fetched and fantastic, if it were not corroborated by other observations. We have already pointed out that the Brahmapura kingdom covers the area of the Western Pahāṛī dialect, the nearest relative of Gūjarī, that the Brahmor dynasty seems to have been Śūlikas, a tribe leading the Central Asian invaders after the fall of the Ephthalites and before the emergence of the Gurjaras; that the Gurjaras came from the settlement-area of the Yue-chi (allied or identical with the Tokharians) in the former Kushān Empire.

Moreover, historians, linguists and archaeologists have already come to the conclusion that in all probability the Tokharians [89] were a European people, probably Celts with an admixture of Teutonic tribes who in prehistoric times moved by way of the Black Sea to Turkistan and the Tarim Basin, at last invading China and leaving their mark as far as Dongson in Indochina and Nias in Indonesia. Later the Yuechi-Tokharians of Central Asia were again pushed back to Bactria where the upper Oxus Valley preserved the name Tokharistan deep into Muslim times. Other Celtic tribes seem to have joined them later-on through the Balkans and Asia Minor. May we thus explain these "Celtic" elements in the folk art of the Panjab Himalaya as products of Tokharians swept into India by the Ephthalites [90]?

Thus the indirect evidence pointing to a barbarian state founded by a Gurjara horde, Tokharians as well as frontier Indians, under the leadership of Śūlika princes, in the 6th century and disappearing between the 8th and 10th centuries, is considerable. Nevertheless, it will be wise to be cautious. For as long as the crowning evidence of incontrovertible historical records cannot be discovered, we can speak only in terms of greatest probability, not of irrefutable facts. And that these records will ever be found is improbable. For those who might have left us

Chinesischer Kunst Berlin 1929, figs. 428, 429, 442, (also Western fibulas!); Fritz Low Bear, *Artibus Asiae* X, no. 4, p. 302 ff. — Another motif to be mentioned in this connection is the six-petalled flower or star in a roundel, common in Rajput and Gujarātī folk art, but also in the Caucasus, South Russia and the Balkans.

89 Jarl Charpentier, *Z.D.M.G.* LXXI, p. 347 ff., 1917); R. Heine-Geldern, *Saeculum,* II, p. 225 ff., 1951; J. Kunst, *Kulturhistorische Beziehungen zwischen dem Balkan und Indonesien* (Kgl. Institut für die Tropen), Amsterdam 1953.

90 Whether polyandry in Kulu (see E. von Ujfalvy, *op. cit.*, p. 37, map IV; Harcourt, *op. cit.*, Kangra District Gazetteer I and II) might be connected, in the present context, with the Ephthalites, or was imported from Ladakh, is a moot point. It is worth observing that it occurs mainly in Saraj whither Tibetan influence did *not* penetrate. Also everywhere in Rājasthān vestiges of mother-right, generally connected with polyandry, can be traced. See O. R. Ehrenfels, *Mother Right in India,* Hyderabad-Bombay 1941.

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such a record, had all an interest to wipe out the memory of a past of which they must have been not too proud. For more than thirteen hundred years Hindu civilization has moulded those foreigners. Those who might have spoken, have since long disappeared, and their descendants mixed with the indigenous people and with later immigrants. Those who survived, were illiterates for many generations, of weak historical memory and narrow geographical outlook. No more than the Ahīrs or Gūjars, or even many Rajputs, these hill people remember anything of their empire-building ancestors. They have become the natives of the country, of older standing than the Rajput princes and Brahmins who subjected them to their rule; they likewise regard themselves as orthodox Hindus according to their lights. And why not? Hindu civilization has found a place for so many people, Hindu religion includes also the gods who are the patrons of the Himalayan mountains, fountains and rivers, and in Indian art the traditions of the Himalaya have been reduced to local folk styles.

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CHAPTER IV

THE COMING OF HINDU ART IN THE HIMALAYA

Indian art in the Himalaya has been a late-comer. In olden times the inhabitants of the Himalaya were regarded as degraded *kshatriyas* and outcastes who did not take part in the orthodox Hindu cults and customs. In consequence the influence of Indian art was feeble, and archaic forms persisted much longer than anywhere else in the country. No monuments of this art have survived as all of them seem to have been of wood. But the coins of the Audumbaras (ca. 2nd-3rd century) [1] depict railings like those round the early Buddhist *stūpas,* but enclosing sacred trees (*chaityavṛikshās*), and hut-like shrines, and also snakes and images of female goddesses, as are still found in Himalayan folk art. Railings round sacred places have been discarded since the victory of orthodox Hinduism. Yet they have not completely disappeared; for the lotus roundels filled with divine, human and animal figures which are so familiar to us from Bharhut, Sanchi, Bodhgaya and Mathura, continued to be used as a decoration of fountain-stones up to the 12th century [2], and in the folk art of the Brahmor and Chatrarhi districts as late as the 18th century. Under Kushān rule the art of the plains slowly began to penetrate the hills, as is evident from the ruins of a *stūpa* at Chetru [3] near Kangra and two rock inscriptions in Brāhmī and Kharoshṭhī at Kanhiara and Pathyar [4], probably also from a bronze statuette of Sūrya in the Svetoslav Roerich Collection, in a Scythian costume, but with certain particularities of the early Gupta period.

What monuments the Imperial Guptas left, is difficult to say. Temples with sloping roofs of stone slabs, similar to the Lād Khān and Durgā temples at Aihole, still stand at Jageśvar, Bageśwar, Dvarahat (Maniyar Group), Baijnath

1 A. Cunningham, *Coins of Ancient India,* London 1891, pls. IV, 1, 2, 7, 8, 12, 13, V, 1-3; Coomaraswamy, *History of Fine Art in India and Indonesia,* London 1926, figs. 116-117.

2 Vogel, *Antiquities,* pl. IV, XXVII, XXXIV, XXXVII, figs. 11, 12, 14.

3 A. Cunningham, *A.S.R.* V, 173; *A.P.R. Northern Circle* 1905-06, p. 10, 1919-20, 1920-21.

4 S. Konow, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions,* p. 178, pl. XXXVI, *2-3.*

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(Bannī Deo) [5] in Kumaon, and at Pandukeśwar in Garhwal [6]. Likewise the prototype of the wooden "hill temple" seems to have been introduced in Imperial Gupta times. For although the extant structures are no more than a few centuries old (on the average 15th-19th century), the cella, enclosed by an open pillar-supported Pradakshiṇāpatha (circumambulation gallery) crowned by a pyramidal or gable roof, closely resembles the stone temples of Nachna-Kuthara [7], Gop [8] and Aihole [9].

First in the 6th-8th centuries, under Yaśodharman, the Maukharis and Pushyabhūtis, and finally under Yaśovarman of Kanauj, Gupta art gained a strong foothold in the Western Himalaya. Unfortunately our knowledge of later Gupta art is so fragmentary that any chronological survey can be only tentative. Between the 4th and the 8th centuries the transition from the cube-like early Gupta shrine to the medieval temple tower was completed; but the number of surviving monuments is very small, the dates of most of them have not yet been ascertained, and others are known only through Greater Indian, especially early Cambodian and Javanese copies and free imitations. Of later Gupta sculpture we can state so much that in the 6th century a ponderous "Baroque" style prevailed and in the 7th century a slim, somewhat effeminate elegance, whereas in the 8th century figures regained their strength, but also developed a certain rigidity and exaggerated postures and movements. However, there exist a number of deviations from this general rule, the full extent of which has not yet been defined. Moreover in a backward area such as the Himalayan valleys then had been, art often was "provincial" and lagged behind the developments in the plains. But as the length of this timelag was conditioned by political circumstances of which we can infer only the crudest outlines, in most cases we have to reckon with the possibility that the monuments in question may be one or even two centuries later than their style seems to indicate [10].

Likewise few archaeological monuments of the Himalaya have been critically analyzed. Only one or two exceptionally well preserved temples, such as those of Bajaura [11]and Masrur [12], have been described. Of others only short descriptions,

5 *A.S.R.* 1922-23, p. 13 ff., pl. 6; 1923-24, p. 12 ff., pl. 4, c, d; *A.P.R. Northern Circle* 1913-14.

6 A. Führer, *The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions of the N.W. Prov. and Oudh.* Allahabad 1891, p. 44.

7 A. Cunningham, *A.S.R.* XXI, p. 95, pl. XXV; *A.P.R., Western Circle 1918-19.*

8 H. Cousens, *Somanatha and other Mediaeval Temples in Kathiawad,* Calcutta, 1931, pl. XXVII.

9 H. Cousens, *Chalukyan Architecture,* Calcutta 1926, pl. II ff.

10 For the same reason the temples with sloping slab roofs may be later than the 5th century.

11 Vogel, *A.S.R.* 1909-10, p. 18 ff.

12 H. Hargreaves, *A.S.R.* 1915-16, p. 39 ff.

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occasional photographs or illustrations are available, *e.g.* of Jageśwar and Dwarahat [13], Brahmor [14], Balor (Vallāpura) [15], Martand [16], Malot [17], and Amb [18]. But a number of later stone temples have been erected on late Gupta or Pratihāra substructures, wooden temples in the folk style of the hills encase earlier ruins, and stray sculptures, — last remnants of vanished shrines — can be traced, built into the walls of later temples, or lying about in villages and fields. In the following outline I have, therefore, to rely not less on — anything but exhaustive — personal observations than on the scanty information published by others or culled from the photographic archives of the Archaeological Department of India. And I have to take the risks arising from all the uncertain factors enumerated above.

As far as we can judge at present, even the Hindu art of the 6th century is very sparsely represented. In the Panjab plains we may mention a fine temple at Agroha (Hissar District), the fragments of which now are in the East Panjab Museum, Buddhist or Jain pieces at Pinjaur [19], and finally the ruins of Kapalamochan [20]. In the Himalaya the Lakha Maṇḍal (in Chaunsa Bawar, Kumaon) Praśasti [21] mentions a Śiva temple erected by Īśvarā, a princess of Singhapura [22] for her deceased husband Śrī-Chandragupta, son of the Yādava king of Jālandhara (Kangra Valley and adjoining districts in the plains) about A.D. 600; unfortunately this temple has been replaced by later, more pretentious buildings. But the Gupta sculptures [23] found there, especially a fine group of Śiva and Pārvatī, can very well be fragments from this shrine. The copperplate grant of Mahārājā Mahāsāmanta Samudrasena (beginning of the 7th century?) in the Paraśurāma temple at Nirmand mentions a temple of Śīva Śūlapāṇi as well as a village Śūlīśagrāma; there are still some small early Śaiva shrines of this very time at Nirmand [24], but it is impossible to decide which of them was that of Śiva Śūla-

13 *A.P.R. Northern Circle,* 1913-14.
14 Vogel, *Antiquities;* and *A.S.R.* 1902-03, p. 239 ff.
15 P. Ch. Kak, *Indian Art and Letters,* VII, p. 65.
16 On Kashmir architecture quite a number of books have been published, the best being R. Ch. Kak, *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir,* London 1933. But none is exhaustive.
17 *A.P.R.* Northern Circle 1915-16; *A.S.R.* 1920-21, I, pl. III; Burgess, *The Ancient Monuments, Temples and Sculptures of India,* vol. II, pl. 237-241.
18 *A.P.R.* Northern Circle 1920-21.
19 A. Cunningham, *A.S R.* XIV, p. 70.
20 *Ibid.,* p. 75, pls. XXIV-XXV.
21 G. Bühler, *Ep. Ind.* I, p. 10.
22 The Sang-ho-pu-lo of Hsüan-tsang, a vassal kingdom of Kashmir, probably to the north of the Salt Range; see Th. Watters, *op. cit.* I, p. 248.
23 M. S. Vats and V. S. Agrawala, *J.U.P. Hist. Soc.* XVII, pt. 1, p. 87 ff.). See also *A.P.R. Northern Circle 1909-10, 1917-18; A.S.R. 1923-24,* pl. XXIg, XXIIa; 1929-30, pl. IVd.
24 A. H. Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet,* I, pls. I, IIb, IIIa, IIIb, Calcutta 1914.

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pāṇi, and which the Kapāleśvara of Sarvavarman Maukhari [25]. Finally, at Thava above Nagar in Kulu the plinths of two(?) small Gupta shrines are now incorporated in the substructure of the *vimāna* of the Murlīdhar temple.

To these few ruins we may add some isolated sculptures traced here and there, remnants of lost sanctuaries. The most important of these are the Buddha from Fatehpur [26], and the above mentioned Sūrya image [27] from Guṁ, in the Ravi Valley, halfway between Chamba and Brahmor (Fig. 3). The Fatehpur

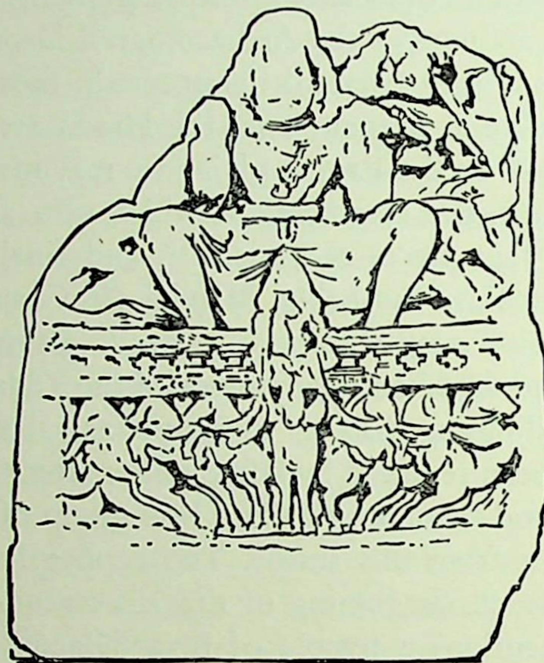


Fig. 3

bronze statuette, inlaid with silver, combines features of the late Gandhāra and the Gupta style. The Guṁ image, though in the Gupta style and technique, has Sasanian costume and locks [28]. Probably both sculptures should be connected with the early Brahmapura kingdom when Maukhari-Gupta influence had not yet

25 J. F. Fleet, *Gupta Inscriptions,* p. 147, 149, 286 ff.; J. N. Banerjea, *Proc. 15th All-India Or. Conference,* Bombay 1949, p. 298 ff. — The epithet Śūlapāṇi is interesting. For as such bynames often were selected as allusions to the names of the chief donors, Śūlapāṇi might refer to a Śūlika family.

26 Vogel, *A.S.R.* 1904-05, p. 107.

27 B. B. Bhattacharya, *Indian Images,* I, Calcutta-Simla 1921, pl. XVIII; Hackin-Carl, *Recherches archéologiques au Col de Khair-Khâna,* Paris-Brussels 1936, p. 19, fig. II; *A.P.R. Northern Circle 1905-06.*

28 Though this treatment of the hair was in vogue also with the later Guptas the Sasanian fashion differs from that of the Guptas. The latter was comparatively compact, and rather flat on the crown of the head. The Sasanians wore the curls high on the top, and loosely floating down over the shoulders.

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ousted the preceding impact of the Sasano-Kushān art of Afghanistan. In Kulu a Hāritī idol from Bajaura, in crude technique but with typical Gupta hair style, seems to belong to this period. From the plains we may perhaps add the above mentioned sculptures found at Agroha [29].

The 7th century, on the contrary, is represented by many monuments of later Gupta art. As the great Harshavardhana of Thanesar then was the overlord of all the states east of the Ravi, we may safely regard him as the ultimate inspirator of this special style. But in the plains so little [30] is left of the art of his reign, that the Himalayan temples and sculptures of this time, like those of Nepal, have to serve us as substitutes in order to gain an idea of what the Harshavardhana style had been like. First, in Kumaon, there are the slim and elegant bronze statues of the socalled "Pauṅ rajas" at Katarmal and Jageśwar [31] which probably represent the Bodhisattva Lokeśvara. Their gilt bronze, inlaid with silver foil, is of the same type as that of early Nepalese work, previous to Kashmiri and Pāla influence. Further west the Lakha Maṇḍal sculptures have already been mentioned [32]. The substructure of the Shaṇmukheśvar temple at Bilaspur on the Sutlej may be connected with the vassal state of Śatadru. For its plinth shows the repetition of angular and cushion mouldings characteristic of the late Gupta ruins of Sarnath, Saheth-Maheth, etc., whereas the lintel of its door has a frieze of flying deities (fig. 6) very similar to those of the Lakshaṇā Devī temple at Brahmor. To the Jālandhara vassal kingdom belong the small Mahāyāna *stūpas* of Chetru (Chaitru) some miles from Kangra town, the fine, but badly defaced reliefs of the river goddesses on the Darshan Darwāza of the Kangra Fort [33], the image of a ten-armed goddess (Mārīchī?) on a pedestal-chariot drawn by seven horses, and some reliefs representing mainly Śiva and Pārvatī, now collected in the enclosure of the Bhavānī temple at Bhavan, the inscribed pedestal of a Vajravārāhī image from Chari [34], and finally the wooden figures of the goddess Deshamucha at Haripur [35].

29 *A.P.R., Northern Circle 1920-21.*

30 The main monuments still preserved are at Nalanda. At Thanesar it would be worth while to undertake trial excavations on the site of a vast fortress of rectangular groundplan which was perhaps Harshavardhana's residence. See A. Cunningham, *A.S.R.* II, p. 212. Other related monuments are those of Pulakeśin II Chālukya at Aihole, Badami, and Ajanta.

31 *A.P.R., Northern Circle 1913-14* and *1915-16*; according to J. C. Powell-Price, *J.U.P. Hist. Soc.* IV, pt. 2, p. 5 ff., 1930, the Paun rajas reigned *ca.* 250 B.C.; the attribution, therefore, has no more value than the more common reference to the Pāṇḍavas.

32 M. S. Vats and V. S. Agrawala, *op. cit.*

33 Vogel, *A.S.R.* 1905-06, p. 14.

34 A. Cunningham, *A.S.R.* V, p. 177; *Kangra Gazetteer.*

35 Apparently not goddesses, but a couple of Scythian donors. Photograph Archaeological Department, Delhi.

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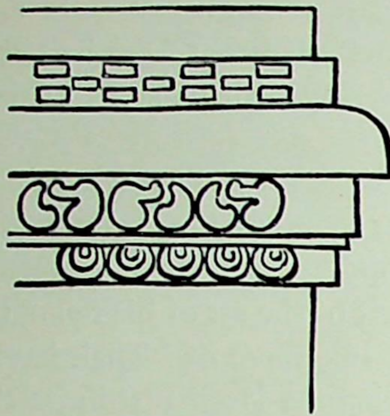


Fig. 4

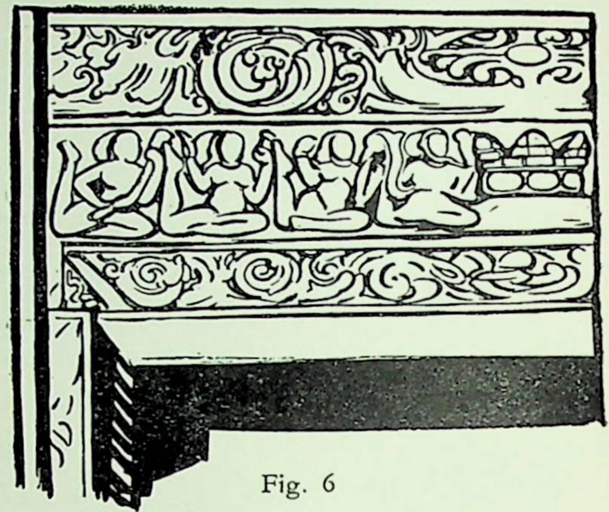


Fig. 6

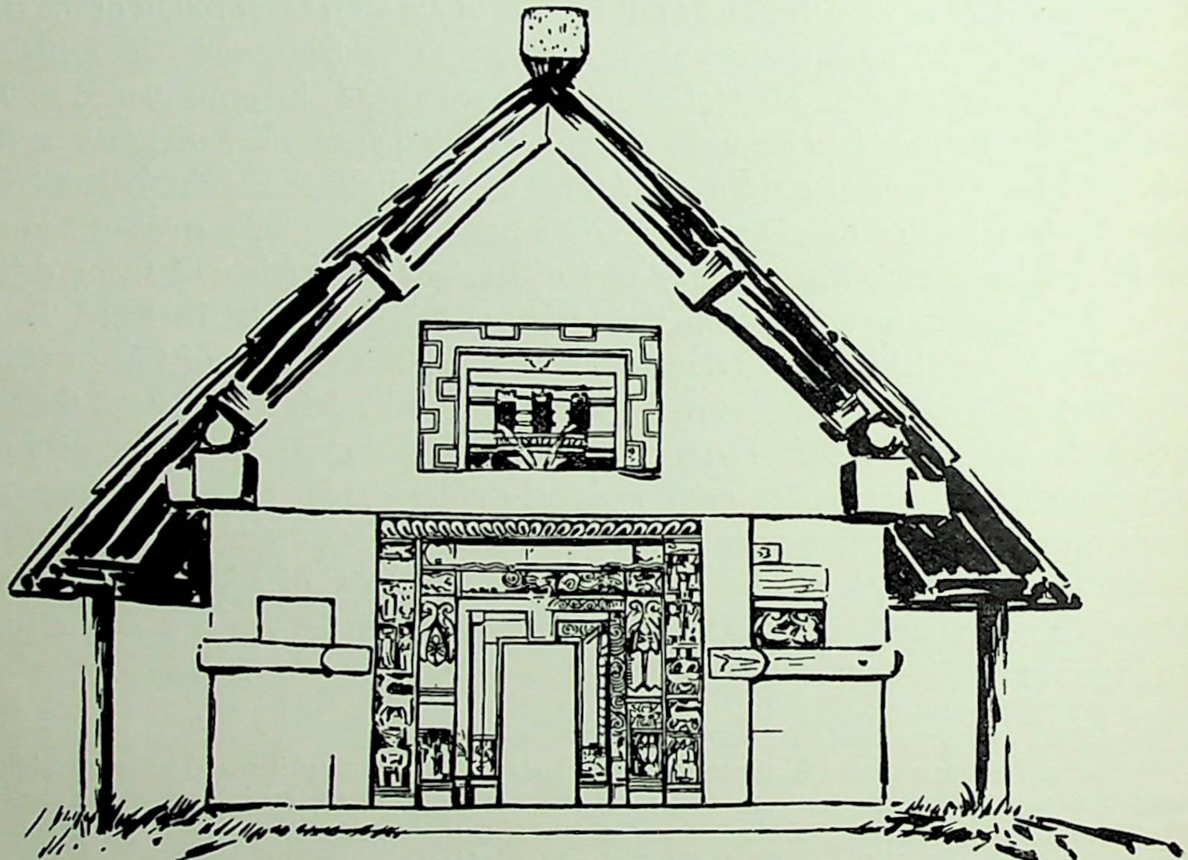


Fig. 5

Next we can connect with the Brahmapura kingdom not only the temples and images of Brahmor to which this book is mainly devoted, but also the platform (fig. 4) of a brick temple in Chamba town [36] and the tradition of the wooden

36 Now in the Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba.

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temples of Kulu [37]. These temples, all only some centuries old, are typical works of "folk" art, sometimes adapting 'Abbasid-Saljuq, Mughal and early or late Rajput motifs, but generally conserving that strange (Tokharian?) ornament style connected with Central Asia and prehistoric Europe which we discussed above. But on the other hand, the general plan, lay-out and even many decorative motifs on their doors, windows and cornices faithfully conserve the tradition of late Gupta art (fig. 5). Generally the characteristic temple tower (pagoda type) of some Kulu temples, with its three successive roofs, is believed to have been imported from Nepal where it is common even today [38]. But as Nepalese sculpture is so strongly indebted to the Harshavardhana tradition, the question arises whether the pagoda tower also did not come from the Indian plains, and from there was introduced both into Nepal and Kulu in the course of the 7th century. For the oldest example of the pagoda type was Kanishka's *stūpa* at Shahji-ki-Dheri near Peshawar (2nd century) [39]. As the excavation has revealed, its platform has certain peculiarities, circular corner projections (probably subsidiary *stūpas,* as in Nalanda [40] and Burma) [41], and steps in the centre of each side. Similar platforms of the later Gupta period have been discovered also at Sanchi [42], Saheth-Maheth, etc., and probably they had a wooden superstructure like Kanishka's *stūpa.* Stone *stūpas* of the same period corroborate such a development. Is was also applied to Hindu temples, as may be inferred from the Meru of Hindu colonial art in Bali as well as from the Panchāyatana type of Hindu stone temples in which the corner *stūpas* have been transformed into small chapels [43]. As we shall see, there are reasons to infer that Meruvarman's temples at Brahmor and Chatrarhi originally had such pagoda roofs, though all the hill temples were too small to stand on platforms with subsidiary chapels. A comparison with the Kulu temples reveals the complete identity of the lay-out of the entrance frames, with their five receding bands of alternately ornamental and figurative, flat and round mouldings, and also of the windows with their

37 Harcourt, *op. cit.* A. H. Longhurst, *Jl. Ind. Art & Industry,* vol. XVI; Vogel, *Indian Art & Letters* XX, p. 26); A. H. Francke, *op. cit.,* I, p. 5, pl. IIa, Tucci-Ghersi, *Secrets of Tibet,* London 1935; Fergusson, *History of Indian & Eastern Architecture,* 1910, I, p. 286, fig. 161; Vogel, *A.S.R.* 1905-06, p. 10 ff., Appendix; A. H. Longhurst, *The Story of the Stūpa,* Colombo 1936, figs. 37-40.

38 S. Lévi, *Le Népal,* Paris 1905-08.

39 D. B. Spooner, *A.S.R.* 1908-09, p. 38 ff. and 1910-11, p. 25.

40 *A.S.R.* 1926-27, pl. VII *a, b*; 1927-28, pl. VII, *a, b,* XLI.

41 E.g. the Mahābodhi and Mingalazedi at Pagan.

42 *A.S.R.* 1912-13, I, pl. VI, (Building 19).

43 A good example is the Avantīśvara temple, Vantipor, Kashmir. A later development is represented by the Baijnath temple on the way from Palampur to Mandi and its derivatives all over the hills.

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miniature columns, in a less degree also of the cornice. In all these cases parallels can be drawn with later Gupta and post-Gupta architecture. Finally the brass images of Meruvarman, notwithstanding certain barbarian peculiarities, follow the canon of ideal beauty prevalent in 7th century sculpture, viz. excessively slim, overelongated bodies, rather small heads, affected hand gestures, elegant, quiet poses, highly stylized costumes, etc. In this respect they remind us not only of sculptures from e.g. Kaman (now in the Ajmer Museum) [44], and of the murals of some Ajanta caves [45], but also of the best early Nepalese bronzes [46]. Stone temples, however, have not survived. A small Śiva temple in the Chaṇḍī Devī compound at Nirmand seems to be a much repaired ruin of this time. Beautiful fragments of a window piece and of a lintel are lying in the old fort at Manali (fig. 7); their fine ornaments link up, on the one hand, with the Brahmor temples,



Fig. 7

on the other, with the art of early Java and Cambodia. A great enigma are still the fine Vishṇu statue from Sultanpur [47] and the curious images of Vishṇu, Gaṇeśa and Durgā in the niches of the Bajaura temple [48]; probably they are 11th century copies of broken images of the 7th century. Also in a small Śiva temple at Zaharpur, Kulu, imitations of 7th century reliefs can be traced. Whether a Mahishamardinī, of early Chālukya type, at Jagatsukh belongs to this or a later date, it is difficult to say.

Still further to the west, we find the influence of 7th century Gupta art in Kashmir, in the substructure of the Raṇeśvara temple (the cemetery of Bahāud-

44 A. Cunningham, *A.S.R.*, XX, p. 54 ff.; *A.P.R. Western Circle 1918-19*, p. 64 f.

45 E.g. the later paintings in cave 17, but especially those of cave 2 which are closely related to the "Indian" frescoes in eastern Turkistan.

46 A. Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, Oxford 1928, pl. 38: Tārā, "Tibetan", but closely related to the Śakti Devī of Chatrarhi.

47 B. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.* I, frontispiece. This 7th century original can be traced back to a prototype of the Imperial Gupta period.

48 *A.S.R.* 1909-10, p. 18 ff., pl. VII.

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dīn) at Srinagar, the Pandrethan *stūpas* and the sculptures discovered at Bijbehara and now preserved in the Srinagar Museum [49].

With the first half of the 8th century we reach the last phase of the Gupta art tradition, which we may connect with Yaśovarman of Kanauj (ca. 723-753), and with an invasion of the early Kashmir style to be attributed to the influence of Lalitāditya of Kashmir (725-756). The Gupta canon is still more or less intact. But new architectural motifs appear which we can trace also in contemporary Chālukya buildings, e.g. at Pattadakal, and in the earliest stages of Rāshṭrakūṭa (e.g. Ellora) and Pratihāra art (e.g. Osian). Sculpture assumes a rather pompous vitality, with exaggerated postures, but also an increasing hardness and mannerism. Ornament becomes much more ostentatious and florid. In other words, a bold parvenu spirit has replaced restrained refinement and culture.

The most important monument of this style known to us is the Telī-kā-Mandir [50] at Gwalior, probably the chief temple of Yaśovarman's court at the time when, after the loss of Kanauj, he had become viceroy of Lalitāditya of Kashmir. This political dependence was also responsible for the admixture of Kashmiri features in the monuments of the same period in the eastern Panjab (up to the Ravi) and of Gupta (Kanauj as well as Magadha) motifs and types in the contemporaneous art of Kashmir and of the western Panjab.

The first group comprises the remnants of a temple plinth in the compound of the Raṅganātha temple at Bilaspur on the Sutlej, very similar to two small later Chālukya shrines at Aihole and Pattadakal, and in particular two of the finest monuments in the Himalaya, the temple of Bisheshwar Mahādeo at Bajaura in Kulu [51], and the "Ṭhākurdwāra" at Masrur, between Kangra and Baijnath [52]. The latter is a rock-cut shrine, in which the four subsidiary chapels of the Gupta Panchāyatana temple are fused with the main shrine into one building of cross-shaped groundplan, a concept which is found in India at Paharpur [53], but more commonly outside India, in early Javanese and Khmer sanctuaries. In the Bajaura temple, on the other hand, the same subsidiary shrines are already included in the main temple, but have not yet been reduced to mere image niches [54] as in

49 H. Goetz, *J. Bombay Univ.* XXI, pt. 2, p. 63 ff., 1952; R. Ch. Kak, *Handbook of the Archaeological and Numismatic Sections of the Sri Pratap Museum, Srinagar.* Simla 1923, pp. 28 ff., 58 ff., 66.

50 H. Goetz, *The Last Masterpiece of Gupta Art: The Great Temple of Yaśovarman of Kanauj (Telī-kā Mandir) at Gwalior,* (*Art and Letters,* in the press).

51 Vogel, *A.S.R.* 1909-10, p. 18 ff.

52 H. Hargreaves, *A.S.R.* 1915-16, II, p. 39 ff. Also H. L. Shuttleworth, *Ind. Ant.* XLIV, p. 19 ff., 1915; *A.P.R. Northern Circle, 1913-14*; 1914-15, I, pl. II, 1925-26, pl. II.

53 K. N. Dikshit, *Excavations at Pahārpur, Bengal,* Delhi 1938.

54 Image niches were already known in classic Gupta temples, *e.g.* at Deogarh; but they never project from the wall.

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medieval architecture and still preserve the character of genuine chapels; this gives the temple a somewhat clumsy appearance which, however, is compensated by its beautiful late Gupta reliefs.

Whereas at Bajaura typical Kashmiri features still are absent [55], at Masrur they appear occasionally. In stray reliefs at Bhavan near Kangra, Nagar, Sarai and Manali in Kulu, and at Maylang in Lahul, Kashmiri gables frame figures of otherwise pure late Gupta type (fig. 8 and 9).

West of the Ravi, the Kashmir style, evolved under Lalitāditya [56], dominated the scene principally in Kashmir proper and the adjoining districts of the Panjab, especially the Śalt Range, and to a less degree east of the Chenab. In Kashmir there are Lalitāditya's great sun temple at Martand, the temples, *chaitya* and *stūpa* of Parihāsapura [57], and finally the temples of the Takht-i-Sulaiman, Ladu, Narasthan, Wangath and Bhuniyar, and, in the plains, the temples of Malot and Amb (smaller temple). Here Gupta influence is noticeable only in the sculptures, and even here it was soon ousted by the new indigenous style. The architecture of Lalitāditya, too, is based on the Gupta tradition, yet not on the Kanauj style alone, but also on a fusion of earlier (6th century?) and Magadha (8th century). Gupta forms with elements from Gandhāra (earlier Kushān, as well as late Kidāra-Kushān motifs), early Byzantium (Syria as well as Constantinople) and even T'ang China.

Further to the east we have the Triloknāth temple in Lahul which goes back to Lalitāditya's time, but was transformed into a Buddhist shrine by Padmasambhava at the end of the same century [58], and was rebuilt and repaired several times; its present Lamaistic image of Avalokiteśvara-Trilokanātha cannot be earlier than the 12th century.

At Brahmor the upper gable of the Lakshaṇā Devī temple is a characteristic Kashmiri product. As it represents Vishṇu in his three-headed form [59], whereas the temple is dedicated to the Devī, it seems to be the last remnant of a Vishṇu temple erected in Ājyavarman's reign, re-used, after its destruction, for filling the gable of the simple roof with which the Devī temple was covered in later repairs. Probably the Narsingh image at Brahmor, enshrined in the 10th century by queen

55 The three-headed Vishṇu image at Bajaura seems to be a Pratihāra copy of an original of the 7th century.

56 H. Goetz, *J. Bombay Univ.* XXI, pt. 2, p. 63 ff.; *Art & Letters* XXVII, no. 1, p. 1 ff.; also R. Ch. Kak, *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir.*

57 R. Ch. Kak, *Handbook,* p. 41.

58 Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* II, p. 475.

59 However, not yet the standardized later type; it can, therefore, not be later than the middle of the 8th century.

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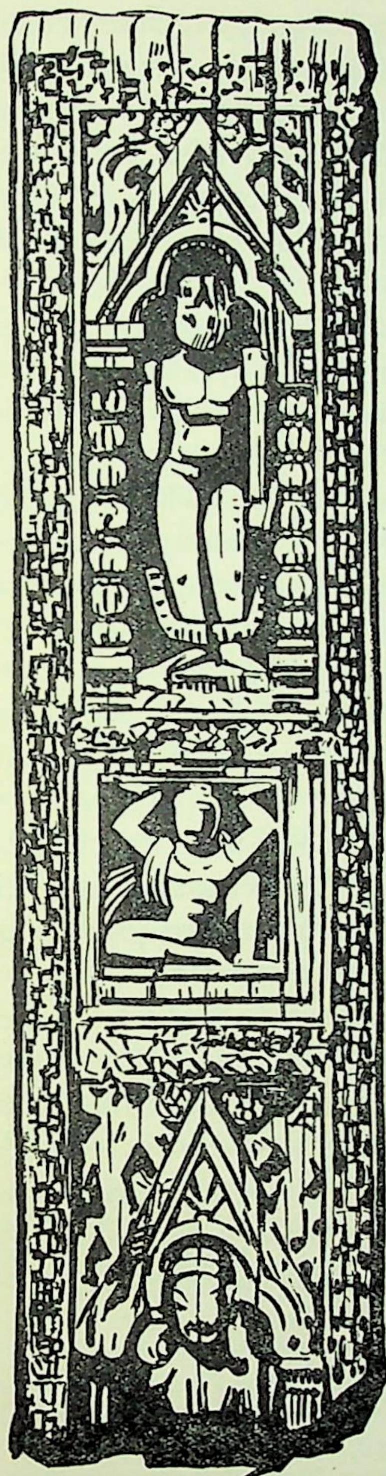


Fig. 8

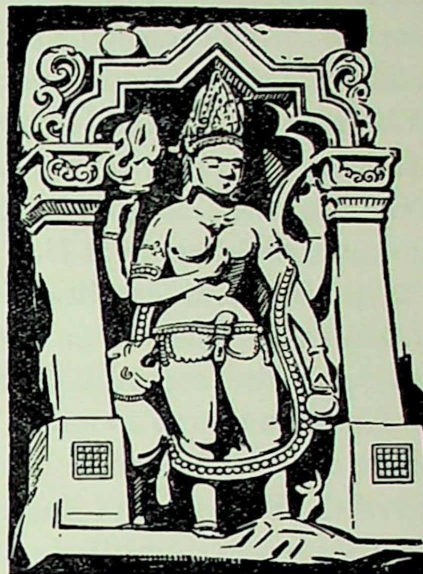


Fig. 9

Tribhuvanarekhā, may belong to Ājyavarman's reign, or at least go back to such a prototype [60]. Finally at Chatrarhi the brass bust of "Śakti Devī" must be mentioned. The Markulā temple in Lahul may also date from this time, though no original work of so early a date survives. But part of the latter has been copied during repairs in the 11/12th and 16th centuries, e.g. the Trivikrama of the eastern window panel, and the Nāgas beneath his feet, or the more conspicuous semi-Gupta groups of Gandharvas and Apsarases on the ceiling of the *maṇḍapa*.

The Harihara temple at Balor, the Kālī temple at Babbor-Thalora [61] and the relief of a curious dancing Vishṇu(?), with three heads, between two dancing goddesses, found in the local raṇa's fort at Mulkihar in Churah, belong however to a later age, particularly to the reigns of Avantivarman (856-83) and Śaṁkaravarman (883-902) of Kashmir. To this period should be assigned the numerous threeheaded Vishṇu

60 For a detailed discussion see the next chapter.
61 R. Ch. Kak, *Indian Art & Letters* n.s. VII, 2, p. 65 ff., 1933, pls. III-IV, XIII-XVI.

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images [62] found all over the Panjab Himalaya, and even beyond, which developed from the form of Vishṇu worship prevalent in the 6th-7th centuries with its accent on Sūrya, Varāha and Narasiṁha. It can be traced first in the 7th-8th century [63], but became standardized not before the 9th century [64]. Finally the last and hitherto hardly known phase of Kashmiri art in the 11th-12th centuries, in its transition to the Lamaistic art of Western Tibet, is represented by the inner façade of the Markulā Devī temple at Udaipur, Lahul.

With the disintegration of Lalitāditya's empire new political and cultural influences became felt in the Panjab Himalaya. About 770 the Āyudha kings superseded the last weak successors of Yaśovarman and seem to have maintained the frontiers of the kingdom at least in the West. But they became subject, in their turn, to the control of stronger powers, especially of the Pālas of Bengal and of the Pratihāras of Rajputana, and, therefore, the art developing under those dynasties began to infiltrate into the Himalaya. There are some monuments which we cannot classify with certainty, but which belong to a transitional style of the late 8th century. These are the Momal Mahādeo temple at Purana Nagar near Suket, the ruins of Aurh near Bilaspur, another temple substructure in the Raṅganātha compound in Bilaspur proper, and the Sandhyā Devī temple at Jagatsukh (Nāst), the oldest known capital of Kulu [65]. The Momal Mahādeo temple unfortunately is very badly "restored". At Aurh only remnants of three chapels on a platform are left, low walls of heavy blocks, round doorjamb mouldings of the usual Gupta type and lintel fragments with curiously degenerated, half-moon-shaped *gavāksha* motifs. The temple substructure in the Raṅganātha at Bilaspur seems unique, in so far as it is the only known Indian counterpart of Chaṇḍī Asu in Java (early 9th century) [66]. The Sandhyā Devī temple at Jagatsukh [67] represents a similar case. Though it is comparatively well known, its real character has not yet been recognized because its original ruins are completely encased in a wooden

62 A. Foucher, *Iconographie bouddhique de l'Inde,* Paris 1905, I, p. 148, no. 1; D. R. Sahni, *A.S.R.* 1913-14, p. 45, pls. 28a & c; Burgess, *Ancient Monuments* pl. XXII, no. 5; *A.S.R.* 1903-04, p. 218 (Kulu); *Boston Museum Bulletin* XVII, no. 104, p. 60; A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Philadelphia Mus. J.,* March 1926; R. Ch. Kak, *Handbook* p. 48, 50; and *Ind. Art & Letters* n.s. VII, p. 75; B. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.,* I, 1921, p. 8, pl. IV; Vogel, *Catalogue Mathura Museum,* Allahabad 1910, p. 100; D. 28; D. B. Diskalkar, *J.U.P. Hist. Soc.* V, p 25, pl. V; Jitendranath Banerjee, *Proc. Ind. Hist. Congress Lahore* 1940, p. 61; M. M. Nagar, *A New Type of Vishṇu Image from Alīgarh,* (*ibid.* Aligarh 1943, p. 89); S. C. Ray, *J. As. Soc.* XVII Letters, p. 251; H. Goetz, *J. As. Soc.* XIX, p. 45 ff.; J. Ph. Vogel, *Catalogue of the Bhuri Singh Museum,* p. 7, A. 35.

63 See the Pallava, early Chālukya and also some contemporaneous North Indian monuments.

64 On the sculptures of the Avantisvāmin Temple, see *A.S.R.* 1913-14, p. 40 ff.; Kak, *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*; and *Handbook,* p. 47 ff.

65 Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* I, p. 52.

66 N. J. Krom, *Inleiding tot de Hindoe-Javaansche Kunst,* The Hague 1923, III, pl. XXXIV.

67 *A.P.R., Northern Circle* 1901-02, 1909-10, 1920-21.

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hill shrine, erected, according to an inscription of 1428, by raja Udham (or Udhran) Pāl [68]. This shrine, however, has in its turn been replaced by a comparatively modern structure with "Mughal" pillars and primitive Nāga and other woodcarvings. What is still visible of the original temple, are walls, entrance, windows and subsidiary chapels in a style intermediate between the last Gupta and the earliest Pratihāra type. The entrance is on one of the shorter sides of the rectangle, as in the Phnoṃ Bàyàng [69], the subsidiary shrines remind us of those of early Javanese temples, the windows of those of the Paraśurāmeśvara at Bhuvaneśvar in Orissa, or of Cambodia, the roof seems to have had some similarity with that of the Telī-kā-Mandir at Gwalior, the sculptures are not very different from the earliest work at Osian in Marwar. We may perhaps mention in this connection the step-roof temples of Katarmal and Jageśvar in Kumaon, as well as the Navadevī [70] and Sūrya shrines at the latter place, with their roofs similar to the Vaitāl Deul at Bhuvaneśvar and the Bhīmasena and Nakula-Sahadeva Rathas at Māmallapuram [71]. In an article published elsewhere I have tentatively connected them with the rise of the Chand dynasty in Kumaon after the fall of Kanauj [72]. Finally we must consider the Buddhist bronzes in the early Pāla style found both in Kulu [73] and Chamba (Chatrarhi) which probably were left behind by pilgrims, when the dependence of the Āyudha kings of Kanauj on Dharmapāla and Devapāla, and the expeditions of the former into Kumaon [74] had opened the way to official and non-official visitors and cultural influence from the Bengal-Bihar kingdom.

The conquest of Kanauj by Nāgabhaṭṭa II Pratihāra in 814 and the consolidation of the Pratihāra empire by Ādivarāha Mihira Bhoja completely changed this situation. Whereas under Vatsarāja and even Nāgabhaṭṭa II, Pratihāra art had still been eclectic, a very definite, strong and manly style developed in the reign of Bhoja and spread over all the vassal states owing allegiance to the emperors of Kanauj. This 9th century art is heavy: massive temples with rather short bee-hive *śikharas,* sculptures with stout muscular or voluptuous bodies of a rustic earthiness, deities of a terrible majesty, a ponderous, but restrained orna-

68 Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* II, p. 421.

69 H. Mauger, *Le Phnom Bàyàn,* (*B.E.F.E.O.* XXXVII, p. 239 ff., 1937-38).

70 *A.S.R.* 1913-14, I, pl. IIIa; 1928-29, pl. IVa; H. Goetz, *The Chronology of the Chand Dynasty,* etc.

71 P. Brown, *Indian Architecture,* I, p. 124 ff.; H. K. Mahtab, *History of Orissa,* 1915, pl. 7; H. Marchal, *L'Architecture comparée dans l'Inde et l'Extrême-Orient,* Paris 1944, pl. IV*c*.

72 *A.S.R.* 1910-11, pl XXVIIa-b; 1928-29, pl. XIV.

73 H. Goetz, *J. Ind. Hist.* XXIX, p. 33 ff.

74 Several fine examples in the Svetoslav Roerich Collection.

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mentation. It was not until the second quarter of the 10th century that Pratihāra art was to rediscover elegance and lightness.

In Kumaon the Jageśvar, Mṛityuñjaya [75] and some smaller temples at Jageśwar, the Ban Deo, Mṛityuñjaya, Kacherī and part of the Maniyar group of shrines at Dwarahat [76], the original sun temple of Katarmal and the temples of Baijnath (Almora district) belong to this Pratihāra style of the 9th century [77]; in the Simla States the main temple of Lakha-Maṇḍal [78] and some images and votive reliefs in front of the Shaṇmukheśvar temple at Bilaspur; in Kulu some of the shrines of Nirmand, the small Sūrya temple and a Mahishamardinī relief at Jagatsukh, fragments of a temple at Churu, sculptures at Bajaura, Nagar and Manali, and finally the fine mask of Mujaṇī Devī at Nirmand [79]; in the Kangra Valley the Kangra Fort and Bhavan; in Chamba the temples of Sāhilavarman and Yugākaravarman in Chamba town, and those of Sāhilavarman and of queen Tribhuvanarekhā at Brahmor; west of the Ravi the temples of Babbor-Thalora [80].

Here we can only briefly mention the temples of Chamba and Brahmor. As set forth in the preceding chapter, the amazing restoration of the former Brahmor dynasty and the foundation of Chamba town and state can be explained only on the assumption that Sāhilavarman had been installed as a frontier governor by Mahīpāla of Kanauj or by one of his near successors. This also enables us to understand the exceptional number and size of his temples [81] i.e. the Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa, Chandragupta, Trimukha, Kāmeśvara and Champāvatī. But when compared with the Pratihāra monuments of the plains, their architecture and sculpture are clumsy and provincial, and in fact still follow the taste of the reign of Bhoja half a century earlier. The same applies to Sāhilavarman's Maṇimaheśa and Tribhuvanarekhā's Narasiṁha temple [82] at Brahmor. Yugākaravarman's brass image of Gaurīśaṁkara at Chamba, on the contrary, despite certain provincial weaknesses, has all the elegance of 10th century Pratihāra court art. More provincial works are the Chandraśekhara temple [83] and the Vishṇu image [84] at Saho, and finally the Bhagavatī image of Rājānaka Bhogaṭa at Svaiṁ (Himgiri, Churah) [85].

75 Rajendralala Mitra, *JASB.* XLVII, pt. 1, p. 384 ff.; Lost Monghyr grant.
76 *A.S.R.* 1928-29, pl. IIIa; *A.P.R. Northern Circle* 1913-14.
77 *A.P.R. Northern Circle 1913-14*; 1922-23, p. 13, pl. VI, 1923-24, p. 12 ff., pl IV.
78 *A.P.R. Northern Circle* 1915-16. H. Goetz, *J. Ind. Hist.* XXIX, p. 33.
79 *A.S.R.* 1923-24, pl. XXII*a*.
80 H. L. H. Shuttleworth, *Acta Orientalia* I, p. 224.
81 R. Ch. Kak, *Indian Art & Letters,* n.s. VII, p. 65., pls. IX-XII.
82 Vogel, *Antiquities,* p. 10; Hutchison-Vogel, *op. cit.,* I, p. 285; *Chamba State Gazetteer.*
83 Vogel, *Antiquities,* I, fig. 16 and 17.
84 *Ibid.,* pp. 17, 51, 120, fig. 24, pl. XIV; *Chamba State Gaz.,* p. 43.
85 *Ibid.,* p. 248, pl. XXXIX*a*

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The later history of medieval art in the Himalaya does not concern us here. In Kumaon the Pratihāra style seems to have survived into the 11th and 12th centuries [86], side by side with examples of imported Gāhaḍavāla architecture, such as the Badrināth temple at Dwarahat or the Har Gaurī temple at Adbadri, Garhwal. Chauhān art also spread into the hills, as is proved by the wooden capitals of Katarmal in Kumaon [87], the chief temples of the Raṅganātha group at Bilaspur and the Kāladhera near Babbor [88]. On the other hand a characteristic local style, clumsy and exaggerated, but not without a weird grandeur, developed from 9th century Pratihāra art within the sphere of influence of the old Trigarta kingdom. Besides the impressive temple ruins in the Kangra Fort [89] and at Bhavan, nearby, we should include in this style the Baijnath temples [90] on the way to Mandi, the temples of Khajiar (oldest fragments) and Chamba town (Bhagavatī and Hari Rāi) in Chamba, as well as stray sculptures from Fatehpur and Haripur (Kangra district), Baijnath, Jagatsukh and Nagar in Kulu, and Chatrarhi in Chamba, Devi-ri-kothi [91] in Churah, and the Kāladhera (Śiva) temple [92] near Babbor. Further to the west the Kashmir style seems to have predominated until the Muslim conquest [93].

86 *Ibid.*, p. 150, pl. XIII(late 8th century).

87 A. Führer, *The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions of the N.W. Provinces and Oudh,* Allahabad 1891, p. 44 ff. (Baijnāth, Pinnāth); D. R. Sahni, *A.S.R.* 1921-22, *p. 50 ff.*: Chauṅ Koṭilī, Katārmal, Khetī Khān); H. Goetz, *J. Ind. Hist.* XXIX, p. 33 ff., 1951; E. T. Atkinson, *Himalayan Districts N.W. Prov.*, II-III.

88 R. Ch. Kak, *Ind. Art & Letters,* n.s. VII, p. 65, pl. XVIII: mixed with Kashmiri forms.

89 Vogel, *A.S.R.* 1905-06, p. 10 ff., pls. II-VI.

90 Fergusson, *op. cit.*, I, p. 297 ff., fig. 165; *A.S.R.* 1929-30, pl. V*a*; Cunningham, *A.S.R.* V, p. 178; *A.S.R.* 1929-30, pl. Va, 1930-34, pl. Va, 1937-38, pl. IIa.

91 Vogel, *Antiquities,* p. 207 f., pl. XXIX.

92 R. Ch. Kak, *Ind. Art. & Letters,* n.s. VII, p. 65, pl. XIX.

93 *Ibid.*; Gurnal, pl. II; Babbor-Thalora (Kālī temple) pl. XIII-XVI, Kāladhera pl. XVIII.

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CHAPTER V

THE EARLY TEMPLES AND IMAGES OF THE FORMER CHAMBA STATE

Our investigations in the preceding chapters may seem to have led us far from the central theme of this book, i.e. the analysis, interpretation and appreciation of those unique wooden temples in the former Chamba State: the Lakshaṇā Devī temple at Brahmor, the Śakti Devī temple at Chatrarhi, and the Markulā Devī temple at Markulā-Udaipur (Mārul). But the historical, ethnological and archaeological investigations were most necessary. For these unique monuments which first seemed to emerge, like mysterious apparitions, from the impenetrable darkness of a past lost in utter oblivion, now have been anchored in a background of political events, social movements and religious and artistic activities which, however abnormal they may appear, fit into the general picture of Indian history and civilization in the agitated transition period between the fall of the Gupta empire and the rise of the principal medieval power of northern India, the Pratihāra empire of Kanauj.

Though a number of details still need further corroboration, though others can at present claim to represent only the most probable links in the chain of evidence of a working theory, the key facts can be regarded as having been established: Brahmor was the last capital of the great Brahmapura kingdom known both to Varāhamihira and Hsüang-tsang. That kingdom was a Gurjara state, like Takkadeśa, Bhinmal, Mandor and Broach, founded late in the 6th century, later a vassal of the Maukharis and of Harshavardhana of Thanesar, then of Lalitāditya of Kashmir, and destroyed by the Tibetan invasion under king Khri-srong lde-btsan. Meruvarman, the founder of Brahmor, was a scion of a Śūlika family who first had been vassals of the earlier Somavaṁśī kings of Brahmapura residing at Taleśvar in Kumaon. He was the greatest ruler of the last Brahmapura dynasty, and the restorer of the kingdom after the death of Harshavardhana and the destruction of Taleśvar by king Srong-btsan sgam-po of Tibet. Today this dynasty would have been forgotten if a distant descendant of Meruvarman, Sāhilavarman, had not founded the Chamba kingdom in the 10th century, as a frontier general and governor of the later Pratihāras of Kanauj. The "Gurjara" population of the Brahmapura kingdom seems to have been a medley of undefinable barbarian

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tribes, some with cultural traditions derived from Central Asia and even prehistoric Europe, most of them, however, frontier-Indians from the Hindukush and Pamir area. From the end of the 6th century, but especially in the 7th century, Hindu civilization, religion and art penetrated fast. When Sāhilavarman founded the Chamba kingdom, the majority of the former "Gurjara" aristocracy had already been extinguished, killed in wars or deported, whereas the survivors had mixed with Indian *kshatriya* families so much that they could claim to be Rajputs. The rest of the "Gurjaras", however, was merged into the hill population as Rāṇās and Rāṭhīs, preserving part of their old characteristics up to the time of the Muslim invasion, or even to the present day.

In this context the character of the early temples of Brahmor, Chatrarhi and Markula becomes clear. Primarily they represent not a local style of architecture and sculpture, but a conscious import of the highly refined post-Gupta art into a barbarian country, comparable to the churches and other religious equipment executed by Syrian, Byzantine and Italian architects and artisans for Charlemagne and his successors or the early churches and monasteries of Kiew designed by Byzantine masters and monks for the first Russian princes of the house of Rurik. But as, with the employment of indigenous assistants, barbarian elements in interpretation, expression and even in ornamental motifs slipt into this Byzantine colonial art of early medieval Europe, various primitive features penetrated the post-Gupta art imported into the Brahmapura kingdom. In the end a new art developed, in the West the Romanesque and Russian, in the Panjab Himalaya the Trigarta and Kashmiri styles.

But, before going into a detailed analysis of these various cultural and artistic trends, it will be desirable to obtain a clear picture of the three temples under discussion, i.e. the Lakshaṇā Devī temple and statue, and the images of Nandi, Gaṇeśa and Narasiṁha at Brahmor, the temple and statue of Śakti Devī at Chatrarhi, and the temple of Markulā Devī at Markulā in Chamba-Lahul.

Brahmor [1] is situated on the shoulder of a hill projecting into the Budhal Valley, everywhere surrounded by fields and pastures (Plate I*a*). It is a small village, and probably it has never been much more. Though the Brahmor buildings, like most in the Himalaya, are of wood, walls and corner pilasters normally are constructed of wooden caissons and frames filled with rubble which would have left some vestiges if the place had once been more extensive. But there are none. In all probability Brahmor had been not a town, but rather a political meeting place and religious centre like the "civitates" of ancient Gaul and Britain, or a "Palatium" like the palace-castles of the Carolingian and Saxonian emperors of

1 Vogel, *Antiquities,* pl. II.

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medieval Europe, while most of the population lived on the farms and in the small villages spread all over the Budhal Valley. In fact, such a situation would fit very well into the general picture of the ancient Brahmapura kingdom [2].

The heart of Brahmor is the precincts of the holy "Chaurāsī", partly shaded by gigantic deodar cedars. Its centre is occupied by the Maṇimaheśa temple [3], a monumental stone temple with a high beehive *śikhara* of the middle Pratihāra type, decorated with hardly any sculptures. It is very similar to the earliest temples of Chamba town and, like them, had been built by Sāhilavarman (ca. 920-40). But the king had merely rebuilt, in the style of his age, an earlier wooden maṇḍapa-temple of Meruvarman, as the brass statue of Śiva's bull Nandi, which still stands under a wooden roof in front of the Maṇimaheśa, bears an inscription of Meruvarman. Its right ear, tail and bell are broken, scars left by the Tibetan invasion to which the earlier temple had fallen a victim. The same applies to the very similar, but smaller Narsingh temple [4], on the side of the Chaurāsī towards the declension of the hill. It was erected by Tribhuvanarekhā Devī, the queen of raja Yugākaravarman (ca. 940-60), for an image which, though not as early as Meruvarman's time, seems to go back at least to the reign of Ājyavarman. Meruvarman's brass image of Gaṇeśa behind the Maṇimaheśa temple, has to be content with a primitive wooden shed (10′ 8" by 10′ 3") with some imitations of the woodcarvings of the Lakshaṇā shrine. This Devī temple alone, though likewise rebuilt as a modern hill temple, has preserved most of its ancient glory, as its interior and façade are still intact. It stands on the hillside of the Chaurāsī, next to various old fountain stones (most of a rather late date) and of the shrines of the eighty-four Siddhas who are said once to have accompanied the saint Charpaṭnāth and Sāhilavarman to Chamba [5]. On the western side of the Chaurāsī, finally, there stands the Koṭhī (mansion) of raja Pṛithvī Singh (1641-64) and Umed Singh (1748-64), an interesting work of Rajput hill art. However, local tradition asserts that the ancient palace of the kings of Brahmapura had been situated on the open ground (Chaugān) between the Chaurāsī and the village which still bears the name Bāḍī (Sanskrit *Vāṭikā* = a garden), and where old

2 The same is probably true of the earlier capital, Taleśwar-Brahmapura, which according to Hsüan-tsang had a circumference of 20 li, i.e. 3½-4 miles. A similar case, on a much vaster scale, seems to have been the early Pratihāra town Osian (Marwar), apparently once an immense camp, but with massive monuments only near the princely residence and at some other rallying points.

3 Vogel, *Antiquities*, p. 96, fig. 16.

4 *Ibidem*, p. 100 f., fig. 17, p. 159 ff., pl. XVI; Hutchison-Vogel, *History*, I, p. 289.

5 As already mentioned, Charpaṭnāth seems to have been rather the guru of Meruvarman, but he and his Siddhas may later on have been mixed up with other Kānphaṭa yogīs who acted as advisers to Sāhilavarman.

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bricks [6] and coins [7] are said to have been washed out by the monsoon rains.

a) The Lakshaṇā Devī Temple at Brahmor.

Like so many ancient sanctuaries in India, the Lakshaṇā Devī temple [8] is a ruin kept in good repair because its cult has never been seriously interrupted. But these repairs have been executed without any proper understanding of the original design, in the technique and taste of the local peasant architecture (Plate I *b*). Thus today the temple appears as a simple hut of wood-and-rubble construction with a broad, far-projecting gable roof covered with slates, very similar to many local shrines all over the hills, but especially to those in Kulu. In the centre of its front, however, there rises a masterpiece of woodcarving, still most impressive despite its present deplorable condition: a richly carved entrance frame on which rests a three-storeyed pediment, in its turn crowned by a triangular gable (Plate II). Inside, there is a rectangular *maṇḍapa* supported by four pillars interlinked by railings on both sides. And behind the *maṇḍapa* there opens the quadratic cella, again with a richly carved entrance between two other pillars, enshrining the "brass" (*ashṭadhātu*) statue of Lakshaṇā Devī.

It is not easy to describe the façade of the temple; for the snow and rain of thirteen centuries have utterly corroded even the resistant deodar wood, so that only the stronger fibres of the carved surface remain. Thus, from some distance the figures, deeply carved, appear quite distinct, but if one approaches in order to study the details, the definition becomes more and more indistinct. For an exact explanation of Indian religious images the identification of their costume, hair style, crowns and various emblems is necessary, but only an approximate explanation of the decoration is now possible.

In its general lay-out the temple entrance follows the average pattern of the later Gupta temple, such as, in the Himalaya, still survives in the, much later, wooden temples of Kulu. It consists of a sequence of alternating ornamental and figural frames, successively receding from the enclosing wall to the deep niche of the door proper. The first frame, slightly projecting from the enclosing rubble wall, is a semi-circular moulding carved with rich floral scrollwork. Near the

6 Brick buildings in the Panjab Himalaya are very rare, and all belong to the late Gupta period, e.g. the platform of a temple in Chamba town, the *stūpa* of Chetru near Kangra, and the *stūpas* of Pandrethan in Kashmir. Also at Lakhanpur and Taleśvar in Kumaon old bricks are said to have been found.

7 These silver coins, buried in a copper vessel, had been distributed to *sādhus* and, therefore, can no more be identified. As the local people declare, however, that they bore Persian inscriptions, they have nothing to do with the ancient Brahmapura palace. They may have been Mughal pieces possibly buried in the time of Pṛithvī Singh's or Umēd Singh's stay at Brahmor.

8 A. Cunningham, *A.S.R.* XIV, p. 110 ff.; Vogel, *A.S.R.* 1902-03, p. 239 ff.; pl. XXXIV*a*; Vogel, *Antiquities*, fig. 2; *Chamba Gaz.*, p. 43 ff.

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upper corners, where the jambs of the entrance turn into the lintel, it projects to the right and left, in order to offer room to two winged lions. These lions are treated in a heraldic manner, so that their sitting figures rise to a height almost four times the breadth of their basis [9]. The next frame consists of two jambs covered with figures and of a lintel of flying godlings. On each side there are four deities, each standing on its own pedestal, and at the bottom a kneeling yaksha supporting, with his arms, the whole doorjamb. The figures are so deeply carved that they seem to be almost separate sculptures placed in front of the background; but unfortunately they are so badly damaged that they can no more be recognized. The deities of the lintel apparently are Gandharvas, five couples on each side, each Gandharva holding musical instruments in his hands and carrying his mate, with some sacrificial gifts in her hands, on his back. Only the central figures hold what seems to be a feathered crown [10]. The next frame is again a rounded moulding of vegetative scrolls from which, in the centre of the lintel, emerges a *kīrtimukha* mask. Then follows another frame consisting of four standing figures on each side, and of a supporting yaksha at the bottom. Though these figures are of somewhat smaller size, some of them can still be identified. For, being deeper in the recess of the entrance, they have been less exposed to the weather. The two statuettes at the bottom represent the goddesses of the holy rivers: Gaṅgā, standing on a *makara,* to the left, and Yamunā (Jamna), on a tortoise, to the right. Both are attended by a small maidservant who originally must have held a parasol. Of the other figures one seems to represent a three-headed Śiva, another Vishṇu with human, boar and lion head, and a third possible Sūrya. On the lintel four couples of flying godlings carry garlands to a central flower (*padma?*), possibly a symbol of the mistress of the shrine [11]. The innermost, broad and flat frame consists of highly stylized leaf scrolls arranged in oblong medallions formed by the long stalk from which these scrolls branch off.

In order to relieve this beautiful entrance from the pressure of the pediment, the latter has been mounted on a long beam anchored in the rubble wall on both sides. It likewise is a very heavy piece, rising in three storeys. The lowermost storey consists of ten miniature niches of round arches supported by short pilasters

9 The tradition of these heraldic lions has survived in the Brahmor district until comparatively recent times. They are found also at the Gaṇeśa temple and, as balcony supports, in village houses, e.g. at Khani, though in a curiously misunderstood form, even with human faces.

10 Such crowns appear also on the lintels of the Śakti Devī temple at Chatrarhi, of the Ṭhākurdwāra of Masrur, and of the Shaṇmukheśvar at Bilaspur. The last one looks exactly like a medieval European crown. This crown motif seems to have been characteristic only of this area and this period, and may possibly have been of foreign origin.

11 The open lotus flower corresponds to the *yoni* and (double) triangle as a *yantra* of the *Śakti,* the female cosmic principle.

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with "pot-and-foliage" capitals. And in each niche there stands a couple of lovers (*mithuna*), each in a different attitude of wooing, embracing or kissing. The second storey has a similar number of niches, but without arches. These niches are framed by eleven dancing Caryatids, standing on consoles projecting above the pillars of the preceding storey and again holding the brackets supporting the top storey. And in each niche there sits some godling in a miniature chapel with a threefold roof. This last storey resembles, to some degree, that at the bottom, but the columms are lower, the arches depressed, and the niches are occupied by squatting figures with human or animal heads (*gaṇas?*). The projecting cornices of the last two storeys are decorated with a frieze of suspended knobs (*opalī*), a motif found also in other hill temples [12].

On this pediment rests the gable, a triangular panel enclosing a trefoiled niche in which an impressive deity is seated. This gable is supported by a frieze of nine deities sitting, with crossed legs, in very low arched niches. Apparently these are the Navagraha (Nine Planets). The other two sides of the triangle are ornamented with a rounded cornice moulding of highly stylized scales or leaves. In the arch Vishṇu is sitting, held up by his *vāhana* Garuḍa, while on both sides two rather distorted *chāmara* (fly-whisk)-bearers are standing. Garuḍa, with very short legs and almost prostrate, is quite inconspicuous, hardly more than a variant of the yakshas on the pediment. Vishṇu, with three faces (boar, human and lion) amidst a mass of ringlets, once had twelve arms holding in their hands the symbols of his power, though now many of them are broken. Of his right arms the uppermost holds a parasol, the second probably a mace or a lotus flower, the third an arrow, the fourth rests on the attendant, while the last two are lost; of his left arms the uppermost carried a lotus or trident, the second a disk, the third a bow, the fourth rested on the other attendant, the two lowermost are likewise broken [13]. The whole gable triangle, however, is again framed by two richly carved cornice boards.

The interior of the temple is much simpler. The pillars (*thamb,* skt. *stambha*) of the *maṇḍapa* are plain quadrangular wooden posts up to about two thirds of their height (Plate IX). Then a broad and two small ringbands decorated with

12 E.g. at Chatrarhi, Markula and almost all Kulu temples. But it can be traced also in quite a number of medieval temples, especially in Rajputana and Central India.

13 According to the *Rūpamaṇḍana,* a compilation of the time of mahārāṇā Kumbhakarṇa of Mewar, this would represent Vishṇu's aspect as Ananta (the endless); see M. R. Majumdar, *Ind. Hist. Qu.* XVI, p. 524 ff. How far these late classifications can be applied to images of the 7th-9th centuries, cannot be decided before the contemporaneous Kashmir theology will have been properly studied. The three-faced type of Vishṇu has already been discussed in the preceding chapter. As the entrance frame of the Lakshaṇā temple and an image at Bajaura prove, it was not invented in Kashmir, but became there the dominating orthodox form.

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kīrtimukha masks, flowers and string-courses, then a capping covered with lotus petals, and at last a simple pot-and-foliage capital and a flower-decorated abacus follow. The Śrīdhara brackets above are decorated with a central piece (on top of the capital) representing some Hindu god with his *vāhana* sitting in a niche formed by two miniature columns and a round arch rising from the snouts of two *makaras* [14]. The lateral pieces, only slightly rounded off at the lower edge of the end, have reliefs of flying minor deities, and, on the level of the arch, a decorative frieze ending in a scroll. The ceiling is of the "lantern" type so common in India. By covering each corner with a triangular slab extending from the centre of one side to that of the next, the square of the ceiling is reduced to a smaller, diagonally placed square; which is again reduced by the same procedure until the central opening has become small enough to be covered with a single slab. These slabs are all richly carved with ornaments, geometrical borders along the edges, and flower, *kīrtimukha* and *makara* motifs in the centre of the triangles. The central slab finally is filled by an immense lotus rosette, the various rows of petals of which are partly treated in a naturalistic manner, partly dissolve into various other ornaments.

The entrance to the inner sanctuary repeats the decoration of the exterior entrance in a much simplified form. There are no figures except the lions in the upper corners of the, here much broader, round moulding. This moulding is covered with a scale pattern, at a few points interrupted by square panels decorated with rosettes. The rather narrow second and the very broad last, innermost frieze have a rich, but very uniform decoration of leaf scrolls, which in this case is not divided into medallions by the spirals of a connecting stalk.

The object of worship [15] is a fine brass statue, 3 feet 4 inches high, on a pedestal of 9 inches in height (Plate VI). Lakshaṇā Devī (Bhagavatī) is an aspect of Durgā [16], also called Bhadrakālī in the *Vaṁśāvalī*. Today this name is interpreted as referring to Bhadrakālī of Basohli. This seems to be a comparatively modern association, as Basohli was founded only in the early 17th century. Its predecessor Balor, ancient Vallāpura, is not known before the high middle ages, and even the temple of Mallā Devī (an aspect of the Śāradā Devī of Kashmir) at Sukral, the great centre of pilgrimage in the former Basohli State, is of the Muslim period. The only old Kālī temple there is not at Balor, but at Babor (ancient Babbāpura) between Jammu and Ramnagar-Bandhralta, which, however, is not earlier

14 For similar brackets from Bengal see N. K. Bhattasali, *Modern Review,* XLV, p. 442.

15 Vogel, *A.S.R.* 1902-03, p. 239, fig. 2; *Antiquities,* p. 138, 141 ff., pls. VII b, X.

16 The victory of Durgā over the Buffalo demon is described in *Durgāsaptaśatī,* chapters II and III.

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than the late 9th or early 10th century. Moreover Bhadrakālī is venerated in more places in the Panjab Himalaya, and is, in her turn, identified with Jvālāmukhī or Jalpadevī, the great goddess of the Kangra Valley. But of the cult of Jvālāmukhī we have no historical evidence earlier than the age of Maḥmūd of Ghaznī (early 11th century), though, of course, the local priestly tradition claims for it a hoary antiquity. Although the latter is highly probable, the cult seems long to have been of no more than local importance. Thus Lakshaṇā Devī of Brahmor surely cannot be a derivative of the cults either of Basohli-Vallāpura or of Babor or of Jvālāmukhī, but must in reality have its oldest known centre in the Panjab Himalaya. The dedicatory inscription on the image says that "the illustrious lord Meruvarman has caused the holy image of the goddess Lakshaṇā to be made by the workman Gugga", in other words, it goes back to the second half of the 7th century.

As in most of the temples, the goddess is represented as Durgā Mahishamardinī, the "Slayer of the demon Mahisha", a form which we can trace first in the Udaygiri caves [17] near Bhilsa (Malwa) and in the Gupta temple of Bhumara [18], but which became common under the Chālukyas of Badami [19] and the early Rāshṭrakūṭas. As a matter of fact the Brahmor image also follows the iconographic concept of the high Chālukya period (i.e. the 7th century), i.e. the goddess puts her right foot on the head of the killed buffalo demon, after having run her trident into its neck, while with her left hand she catches the buffalo's tail and lifts its whole body up almost vertically [20]. In every other respect, however, the Brahmor image belongs to late Gupta art, in the proportions of the figure, the anatomical treatment, the hair style, the costume, ornaments and emblems. The goddess wears a high *jaṭāmukuṭa* (crown of matted hair), or rather an immense wig, the hair being piled-up in a slightly oblique protuberance bound together by strings of pearls and various pieces of jewelry, thence to fall down on the shoulders and neck in innumerable ringlets. A similar costly belt with attached pearl strings and pendants, and a sort of pearl-studded girdle pressing-in the belly, hold a skirt of very fine muslin. A diaphanous shawl falls down from the shoulders in innumerable fine folds, and a necklace of golden disks hanging from a string of pearls, embossed bracelets from which dangle short strings of pearls and jewels, wristlets and anklets, complete the costume. The eyes of the goddess are inlaid

17 D. R. Patil, *The Monuments of the Udaygiri Hill,* Gwalior 1948, pls. 9, 14.

18 R. D. Banerji, *The Temple of Śiva at Bhumara,* Calcutta 1924, pl. XIV b.

19 R. D. Banerji, *Basreliefs of Badami,* Calcutta 1928, pl. II b; but the hairstyle and crown are different.

20 Another image of the same iconographic and stylistic type is in the Sandhyā Devī temple at Jagatsukh, Kulu.

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with silver, and her four arms hold, in the upper right hand, a trident (*triśūla*), in the lower right a sword (*khaḍga*), in the upper left hand a bell (*ghaṇṭā*) and in the lower left the tail of the buffalo demon.

b) Meruvarman's other Images at Brahmor.

As already observed, the Lakshaṇā Devī temple is the only fairly well preserved monument still left of Meruvarman's capital Brahmapura. Of the other temples only part of the images survives. What these originally had been, we know from a group of reliefs [21] on a boulder in the Brahmani Devi Nala on the way from Brahmor to Khani. They show Lakshaṇā Devī, Śiva standing in front of his bull Nandi, Gaṇeśa and a *liṅga.* Today only the brass idols of Lakshaṇā Devī, Gaṇeśa and Nandi exist, and possibly also the *liṅga* if we may identify it with the Rāmeśvara or Sūrajmukh (Sun-face) *liṅga* still held in high veneration at Brahmor [22]. It stands on a large copper *yoni* once set with some ornaments; if these might have been small silver flowers, as it seems, such a late Gupta motif would fit well into the time of Meruvarman and prove the identity of both pieces.

The statue of Śiva has disappeared, and only the Nandi belonging to it is left; the statue seems to have had some resemblance to the Śiva from Avantipur in the Srinagar Museum [23], though it had not the somewhat effeminate elegance of the latter.

The other reliefs are not exact reproductions of the images of Meruvarman. Both the Devī and Gaṇeśa look heavier and coarser, the first rather similar to the early Mahishamardinī of the Udaygiri hill. As a matter of fact the whole style of the reliefs is different from that of Meruvarman's time, being more like that of the Śaiva reliefs along the road leading up to the Sūraj Pol of the Gwalior Fort. Unfortunately the date of these Śaiva reliefs is not exactly known, but cannot be later than the 8th century.

On the other hand, it is interesting that among the reliefs of the Brahmani Devi Nala the figure of Narasiṁha is absent, whose idol likewise forms one of the treasures of Brahmor. Thus, it cannot have been in existence in Meruvarman's time and not even in the early 8th century. Actually, it is the only metal statue which bears no inscription. Dr. Vogel, therefore, regarded it as contemporaneous with the stone temple in which it is housed. According to the Brahmor grant of Yugākaravarman [24] that temple had been erected by his queen Tribhuvana-

21 Vogel, *Antiquities,* p. 252 f., fig. 29.
22 This *liṅga* is, as *Sūryāṁśa,* attributed by the Vaṁśāvalī to Meruvarman.
23 R. Ch. Kak, *Handbook Sri Pratap Museum Srinagar,* p. 55.
24 Vogel, *Antiquities,* p. 159 ff., pl. XVI.

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rekhā by the middle of the 10th century. But the wording of the inscription is vague and may refer to the temple alone not less than to the idol with its shrine, whereas local tradition attributes the image to Meruvarman's reign. As, moreover, the style of the figure differs strongly from the only brasswork of Yugākaravarman's reign that we know, the Gaurī-Śaṁkara group at Chamba, it rather appears that the Narasiṁha image, though later than Meruvarman, had already been in existence when queen Tribhuvanarekhā provided it with a temple. For a more accurate assignment we can, thus, rely only on the internal evidence provided by the image itself, and it will be better to postpone the discussion of this problem until we have been able to analyze the figure in detail.

Evidently all these idols once had wooden shrines of a type similar or at least related to that of Lakshaṇā Devī. We have already seen that these were burnt down in the general destruction of Brahmor by the Tibetan king Khri-srong lde-btsan in the later 8th century. Why, then, has just Lakshaṇā Devi's temple been saved, why at least the idols of the other shrines, and why has only Śiva's statue disappeared? It may have been mere accident. But when we take into account such general conclusions as a careful analysis of Muslim temple destructions in India permits us to draw, we form a different inference. Generally an invading army had not the leisure to wipe out all monuments; during the short time of its stay, most of it preoccupied with looting, rape and carousals, it had to concentrate its attention on such monuments as had been the symbols of power of the defeated state and religion, but would respect whatever appealed in some way to its own beliefs or superstitions. The Maṇimaheśa temple fell as the great state sanctuary or Brahmapura. If the other temples were not spared, the images of Gaṇeśa, Narsingh and Nandi may have been salvaged, because they reminded the Tibetan Lamas of more esoteric deities of their own pantheon, Vighnāntaka, Hayagrīva and the bull of Mahākāla-Bhairava. But Lha-mo (Kālī) was held in superstitious awe by all the Tibetan warriors, and so Lakshaṇā Devī's temple may have escaped, though badly damaged.

The idol of Lakshaṇā Devī has already been discussed. Let us now examine the two other images dedicated by king Meruvarman at Brahmor. The first is Śiva's bull Nandi [25], a brass (or more correctly *ashṭadhātu* = mixture of eight metals) statue, 5 feet high, and 5 feet 10 inches long (from the nose to the tail), on a copper pedestal, 13 inches high (Plate III). A statue of Nandi is usually found in front of Śiva temples, except where the god is represented riding or leaning on it. But always it is represented lying leisurely on its four drawn-in

25 Cunningham, *A.S.R.* XIV, p. 112; Vogel, *A.S.R.* 1902-03, p. 239 ff, fig. 6; and *Antiquities*, p. 140, 143, pls. IX-X.

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legs. But our statue is unique: a standing bull! This represents a survival of an earlier iconographic practice peculiar to northwestern India. For on the Kushāna, Kidāra-Kushāna and Kushāna-Sasanian coins [26] Śiva, the trident in one of his hands (Śūlapāṇi!) always stands in front of an upright bull, whereas this type had been almost unknown not only in India outside the Kushāna empire [27], but also to the Ephthalites. As the reliefs in the Brahmani Devi Nala prove, our Nandi once stood behind a statue of Śiva (ca. 8′ high!) which, to conclude from these reliefs, seems to have been of a type known to us from Kashmir. The Śiva-Nandi group of Brahmor, thus, represents a revival, after the fall of the Ephthalites, of a cult-form once flourishing amongst the Hindus of the Kushān Empire [28]. In other respects the Nandi statue also makes an odd impression. Its body is like a barrel, and its neck and hump are not less unnatural; even the snout is more like that of a pig, and also the legs and hooves are curiously clumsy. Nandi's ornaments, on the other hand, are of the usual type, chains with alternating disk- and bell-shaped pendants, and a cover ending in a "woven" border. The eye-sockets at present are empty and, as in the case of the lions on Aśoka's pillar at Sarnath [29], once must have been inlaid with crystal. The pedestal has the shape of a Gupta plinth or platform. As already mentioned, an ear and the tail have been broken during the Tibetan invasion.

Finally we should mention the idol of Gaṇeśa [30]. It is a "brass" figure, 3 feet high, on a copper pedestal, 14 inches high, and bears, like all the other images except the Narasiṁha, an inscription of king Meruvarman. Gaṇeśa (Plate V) is represented as a fear-inspiring deity with a very stout, muscular body, elephant-

26 Rapson, *Indian Coins,* 1897, pl. II, nos. 12, 13, 15; A. Cunningham, *Coins of the Indo-Scythians,* I, 1888, pls. V, nos. 1-4, 9-13, XIV, nos. 9-10: the same, *Later Indo-Scythians, Scytho-Sasanians and Little Kushānas,* 1894, pl. XIII, nos. 4, 12, 15; P. Gardner, *Coins of the Greek and Scythian Kings of Bactria and India* (*British Museum*), London, 1886, pl. XXI, nos. 6-8, 11-14, XXIX, nos. 10-12; E. Herzfeld, *Kushāno-Sāsānian coins,* 1930, pl. I, no. 7a; II, nos. 9a-b, 15a-d, III, nos 18a, 19b. For a Gandhāra Trimūrti Image (3rd century) see V. Natesa Aiyar, *A.S.R.* 1913-14, II, p. 276 ff., pl. 72a.

27 Śiva in front of bull, both standing: Nāgeśvara Temple, Conjeeveram, 9th century; Tiruvallīśvaram, Tinnevelly Dstr. 10th century; see also H. Krishna Sastri, *South Indian Images,* 1916, figs. 76, 77; Śiva and Pārvatī standing in front of bull, Tiruvalliśvaram, Tinnevelly Dst., Krishna Sastri, figs. 70, 71; Karwan, Gujarat, Kapūrī, Gujarat, 7th century (H. Goetz, *Handbook of the Collections, Baroda Museum,* 1952, pl. 8a), also in Pahāṛī miniatures, esp. late Jammu school.

28 A parallel iconographic case is the group of Śiva-Pārvatī sitting together on Nandi which is rather rare in orthodox India: Pallu, Bikaner (Goetz, *Art and Architecture,* fig. 8); Kherat, Bhind Dstr., (A. R. Gwalior Arch. Dpt. for 1930-31, pl. 4a); Dwarahat, Kumaon, but is found both in Eastern Turkistan (A. Grünwedel, *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkestan,* Leipzig 1912, fig. 410) and in Mandi (Pañchavaktra, and small temple at the Ghāts; Mandi Miniatures).

29 D. R. Sahni, *Catalogue of the Sarnath Museum,* 1914, p. 28.

30 Cunningham, *A.S.R.* XIV, p. 112; Vogel, *A.S.R.* 1902-03, p. 239, fig. 5; and *Antiquities,* p. 140, 142 f., pls. VIII*a,* X.

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head and four arms. In these he holds (upper right) a rosary, (lower right) his second tusk, (upper left) a hatchet with a dagger-shaped blade and (lower left) a vessel filled with sweetmeats (*laḍḍū*) of which he picks up one with his trunk. Like Śiva he has three eyes, the third at the root of his trunk, while his staring eyes, standing-out ears and tense arms appear as if he were prepared any moment to spring into action. He wears a crown of pinnacles connected by strings of pearls resembling half-moons, enclosing a *mukuṭa.* His necklace consists of the same disks which we have seen on the images of Lakshaṇā Devī and Nandi. A snake serves as the *yajñopavīta,* the cord which marks every Brahmin as "twice-born". Around his waist a lion's or tiger's skin is wound, tied together by a knot of two paws, the head on the right, the tail on the left side. The lower body is covered with a *dhoti* decorated with lotus flowers which are visible only on the fragment at the foot of the pedestal, as the legs and feet were broken during the "Kīra" invasion under Khri-srong lde-btsan. Gaṇeśa sits on a lion throne (*siṁhāsana*) very similar to those used for Buddhist and Jain images, only with the difference that the "Wheel of the Law" is replaced by a very queer-looking *gaṇa.* Also the two lions séjant are grotesque products and have very little resemblance to the real animal. Finally, the *siṁhāsana* is decorated with a cloth-cover with fringes, hanging down in a quartercircle in the centre, such as is common on similar Buddhist and Jain pedestals.

c) The Narasiṁha Image at Brahmor.

On the first impression the image of Narasiṁha [31] looks like the exact counterpart of Gaṇeśa (Plate IV). The Man-lion *avatāra* is one of the terrible aspects of Vishṇu, the destroyer of Hiraṇyakaśipu and saviour of Prahlāda. And indeed, the monster looks most horrible, especially in the ghostly front light coming through the temple door. It is a short, plump human figure with a heavy lion's head, sitting on a throne with wide-spread legs, two arms folded under the chin, two held up with extended claws, staring forward with wide-open eyes and half-opened mouth. The legs are tense as if prepared to jump up at any moment, the extended arms seem to wait for the moment when they can bury their long claws in the victim, the hands under the chin are pressed together as if they could hardly suppress the lust of blood glowing in the wild eyes, the tense ears and the slavering mouth vibrate in tensest expectation, the mane stands out like a flaming halo. There are no special symbols of the horrible, no sculls, bones, skeletons, as in Śaiva iconography, only the royal crown (of "Gandhāra--Kashmiri type), the

31 Vogel, *A.S.R.* 1902-03, p. 239 ff., fig. 4; and *Antiquities,* I, pl. VIII*b*.

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royal jewelry and costume, and, on the foot of the pedestal, the laid-aside emblemata of Vishṇu, the mace and the disk, the lotus and the conch. And yet, in its concentrated tension, this masterpiece embodies all the irrational terrors of inscrutable cosmic power.

To this mighty figure the socle forms a curious anti-climax. It is a massive bench decorated with reliefs of mountain peaks stylized in a manner unknown in India, but common in Eastern Turkistan and China. And to the right and left the head of a lion is peeping over the mountains, again stylized in an extraordinary manner, to some degree copied from the face of Narasiṁha, and yet more reminiscent of dragon masks in early Chinese art.

The height of the statue is exactly the same as that of Gaṇeśa, the physical type also links up with the latter's, and even technically hardly any difference can be discovered. But there is no inscription of Meruvarman as on all the other idols executed by master Gugga for that king, and no relief of it in the Brahmani Devi Nala. The Narasiṁha, therefore, cannot have formed part of the images and sanctuaries set up at the foundation of Brahmor.

However, this is not so surprising. Meruvarman's religion was purely Śaiva (-Śākta). And the Nandi image even gives us a hint why this had been so. The type of Śiva, trident in hand (Śūlapāṇi) [32] and set in front of his standing bull is Kushān. And when we trace the other Hindu deities venerated in the Kushān empire we find that Śiva, Sūrya and also the Great Mother in various forms were quite common, but that Vishṇu, who played such a prominent role in the Gupta Empire, was hardly venerated. Meruvarman, being a Śūlika prince, must have been a devotee of Śiva Śūlapāṇi.

Vishṇuism penetrated only with Gupta and post-Gupta influence. At Taleśvar-Brahmapura it must have been known, as at least one king bears the name Vishṇu-varman. In Brahmor it must have been introduced at least before the overthrow of the "Gurjara" kingdom by the Tibetans, because the last prince slain by them, Lakshmīvarman, was named after Vishṇu's consort Lakshmī. Now the impact of late Gupta civilization, and especially of its religion had been strongest at Brahmor in the reign of Ājyavarman, when Lalitāditya of Kashmir settled brahmins and *kshatriyas* from Kanauj there. These exiles must have been cultured persons connected with the court of Yaśovarman, for otherwise Lalitāditya would have had no interest to deport them to such a lonely place as Brahmor. However, as the Vishṇu cult had been most prominent in Gupta civilisation, we may regard these exiles as the bringers of Vishṇuism to Brahmor. And even this Vishṇu temple

32 The Nirmand inscription of Samudrasena mentions a temple of Śiva Śūlapāṇi; likewise his cult was popular with the Śulkīs of Orissa.

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can be traced, at least in one important fragment, i.e. the gable now built into the façade of the Lakshaṇā temple, which, for a number of other reasons adduced above, must go back to the time of Lalitāditya and Ājyavarman.

But what, then, had been the idol of this Vishṇu temple? It can only have been the just discussed statue of Narasiṁha. The combination of Gupta and Kashmiri features which it reveals, was possible only in those days. Moreover, Varāha and Narasiṁha were the favourite *avatāras* of Vishṇu during the later Gupta period [33], often enough overshadowing Vishṇu's divine aspects themselves. For, originally adapted from barbarian deities [34], both had become patrons of the struggle against the Ephthalites and Gurjaras, and protectors of the Indians against the Mlechchhas. Thus they were fused into one new aspect of Vishṇu, with three heads, human, lion and boar, which was especially favoured in Kashmir and remained popular there much longer than in the rest of India [35].

A clash between both systems, Śaivism and Vaishṇavism, was avoided by a syncretistic theology, until by the 9th century the orthodox Hindu system was evolved. Out of a number of abortive attempts by the leading sects to absorb their opponents, there developed an equilibrium, in which first Śiva, Brahmā, Sūrya and Kubera were treated as the four orthodox Hindu gods. But Brahmā was superseded by Devī, and Kubera by Gaṇeśa [36]. In Brahmor we find, thus, the final system already in the reign of Ājyavarman: a closed Quaternity consisting of Śiva as the *nirguṇa,* absolute godhead, Vishṇu as the *saguṇa,* creating god, Gaṇeśa as the divine power active in the visible universe, and the Devī as the *śakti, prakṛiti,* the womb of the material world.

From Pratihāra times onwards the cult of Narasiṁha fell out of favour, and his image, though not forgotten, was relegated to the conventional friezes of Vishṇu's *avatāras.* With the foundation of the great Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa temple at Chamba by Sāhilavarman the aspect of Vishṇu as the kinggod was introduced. And though the erection of the Narasiṁha temple at Brahmor had been a reflection of this Vaishṇava revival in Chamba, queen Tribhuvanarekhā would surely not have selected such an obsolete *avatāra,* if Ājyavarman's idol had not been already in

33 One of the last Gupta emperors bore the name of Narasiṁhagupta; see also Udayagiri, Eran, the Badami caves, Māmallapuram, etc.

34 Varāha probably had been a Hun deity, Narasiṁha a Scythian or Gurjara god or at least came in fashion because of similar Hun or Scythian gods. The lion, the royal animal of southwestern Asia, had been the emblem already of the Western Kshatrapas. Both seem to have been of a solar character.

35 At Brahmor, Chatrarhi and Bajaura the type can be traced already in the 7th century. See above, p. 68.

36 As far as my knowledge goes, the texts have not yet been studied from this point of view; but the evidence of iconography is very clear.

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existence and in need of a decent shrine. Only in popular religion Narsingh is still venerated, but merely as a spirit [37].

d) The Śakti Devī Temple at Chatrarhi.

Very similar to the Lakshaṇā Devī temple at Brahmor is that of Śakti Devī at Chatrarhi[38]. Chatrarhi is a village in Piu *ᶜilāqa,* lying in a fertile upland on the slope south of the Ravi, two-third of the way from Chamba up to Brahmor, not far below the junction of the Budhal and Tundehn Nalas with the Ravi. The village is inhabited by brahmins and musicians connected with the temple and with the great Mela celebrated in the month of Bhādoṉ when dancing goes on day and night, after the idol of the Devī has been bathed in water brought by runners from the Manimahes lake beyond Brahmor. For the Chatrarhi temple is regarded as one of the most holy sanctuaries of the hills, competing with those of Lakshaṇā Devī at Brahmor and of Bhavānī at Kangra. And certainly it is one of the oldest. Tradition attributes its foundation to Mūshūṇa, the legendary ancestor of the old Brahmor dynasty. But the inscription on the idol mentions Meruvarman, the founder of Brahmor, and another tradition says that the temple was the last work of Gugga, the master-artisan of Meruvarman.

This statement is more or less borne out by archaeological evidence. For the building resembles the Lakshaṇā temple at Brahmor in many respects. But there are also a number of differences both in its plan and decoration. For it has no separate *maṇḍapa,* but only one large shrine (16 ft. 1 in. by 16 ft. 1 in.) which, however, seems later to have been subdivided into a cella and a *maṇḍapa.* This nucleus is surrounded by an open gallery, i.e. a *pradakshiṇā-patha* supported by twelve massive wooden columns. But the interstices between the columns have later been filled in with whitewashed rude masonry of rubble blocks and clay strengthened by a number of horizontal beams. Instead, new wooden galleries have been constructed in front and on the right side. And the whole (30 by 29 ft.) is covered by an almost flat pyramidal roof of well-cut slates.

Only the sanctuary proper and the, once open, gallery surrounding it belong to the original temple. The rubble masonry was last renewed after the earthquake of 1905, and old photographs show an almost flat gable roof in place of the present pyramidal one. The later wooden galleries have the elegant, but decadent forms of the 18th century, with columns in which medieval pot-and-foliage capitals, 16th century Rajput brackets and scaly Mughal pillar shafts in the style of Muḥammad Shāh have been blended into a quaint product of "folk art".

37 Sardaru Balhari, *Ind. Ant.* XXVIII, p. 84 ff.; *Kangra and Chamba Gazetteers.*

38 A. Cunningham, *A.S.R.* XIV, p. 113; *A.S.R.* 1905-06, p 25; 1906-07, p. 17; *Chamba State Gazetteer,* p. 43 ff.; Vogel, *Antiquities,* fig. 3.

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As already mentioned, the original shrine is surrounded by a gallery (measuring inside 24 ft. 10 in. by 25 ft. 2 in., and, up to the lowest beam 8 ft. 2 in. high) supported by twelve heavy pillars (1 ft. 6 in. thick) of deodar wood[39], very similar to those in the Lakshaṇā Devī temple at Brahmor. But their decoration is somewhat richer and more elegant, the design more fluid and variegated, but also more mannered, and the individual motifs more interesting, though less numerous (Plate VIII). In comparison with the Chatrarhi pillars those of Brahmor look stiff, geometrical and almost clumsy. On the *śrīdhara* brackets lions and other animals alternate with flying Gandharvas, and stylized flower scrolls with the deities of the central-niche panels. On the exterior side, of course, these carvings are very badly corroded by the weather, whereas the fringe of stalactite knobs (*opalī*) along the edge of the roof must have been renewed in the course of time.

The entrance to the gallery and that to the interior shrine are both of the same type as those of the Lakshaṇā temple. Yet the rich pediment and gable of the façade of the latter are absent, while the sculptures of the door frames proper are less elaborate. The exterior entrance is rather simple: first a small border, then a frieze of decorative bosses and finally a set of four, now badly damaged, deities on both sides. When the pillared gallery round the sanctum was still open, this frame must have stood, almost detached, also in the open. We can trace such arrangements in some later hill temples, though always in connection with a *maṇḍapa* in front, but it is unknown in the rest of India, and possibly this exterior entrance, though an old piece, has been transferred from another, lost shrine. This seems plausible because there exists another ancient idol at Chatrarhi, likewise known as Śakti Devī, but actually the bust of a male deity. The door might thus have belonged to the vanished temple of this image.

The entrance to the sanctum is much more interesting. The outermost frieze projects to the right and left at the top corners, enclosing two sitting lions. The next frame consists of two jambs alternately decorated with three standing deities and three smaller crouching *gaṇas*(?) each. Of the latter two are ox-headed, two lion-headed, one has elephant ears and one a face on his belly. Among the deities Kārttikeya, with six faces and a peacock, Indra with his *vajra* and the elephant Airāvata, possibly also Śiva can be recognized on the left, and Brahmā, four-armed and with a rosary and vessel in his hand, accompanied by two *haṁsas,* on the right. The lintel again is decorated with flying Gandharvas, those in the centre holding a crown, the rest various unidentified objects, each carrying his mate on

39 Vogel, *A.S.R.* 1902-03, p. 239 ff., pl. XXXIV*b*.

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his back. On the jambs of the next frame again four, somewhat smaller, standing deities are represented on each side. Most of them unfortunately cannot be identified; on the left jamb (from top to bottom): a figure holding an object which might be a garland, veil or noose (Vāyu or Yama?), Durgā Mahishamardinī, Vishṇu with human, lion and boar heads and four arms holding his emblems, i.e. the disk, conch, lotus and mace, and at the bottom the river goddess Gaṅgā; on the right jamb: an unidentified goddess(?), a god with a club (Bhairava?), again a god or goddess, and finally the river goddess Yamunā. The corresponding lintel shows thirteen sitting figures, most of them four-armed and, as the tenth from the left, a big head in profile, with matted hair and well-executed ear-rings. This permits the group to be identifed as the Navagraha, including Rāhu the dragon demon causing the eclipse of the moon, and, on the right, the four Lokapālas, the guardian deities of the four cardinal points. The innermost frame, finally, is decorated with highly stylized scroll-work sprouting from longdrawn creeper spirals growing out of the mouths of two sitting yakshas at the bottom.

The idol of Śakti Devī [40] in the sanctum is a fine brass statue, with its socle 4 feet, 6 inches high (Plate VII). This copper socle is much lower than that of Lakshaṇā, as the goddess stands on a big lotus, with reverted over-ripe petals, such as is a very common convention in Nepalese and Tibetan art. She has a very slim, elegant body covered only with a transparent skirt falling down to the ankles and forming some folds between the legs, held by a rich belt (*mekhalā*) with a kind of girdle and strings of pearls of the same type as that worn by Lakshaṇā Devī. Also the scarf hanging over her shoulders, her necklace, armlets, bracelets and ear-rings are of the same sort. But besides these, a long string of pearls hangs down from her neck between the heavy breasts to her thighs. And on her head she wears a high diadem, consisting of a golden circle decorated with two jewelled flowers above each ear, from which bands flow down, and a pile of five jewels above the forehead from which plumets emerge to the right, left and top. In her two right hands Śakti Devī holds a lance (*śakti* = a lance, but also power, energy) and a lotus (life), in her left hands a bell (aether, space) and a snake (death and time).

As already mentioned, another old idol exists at Chatrarhi, believed to represent Śakti Devī. It is likewise a fine old brass image, but only a bust from the waist upward emerging from the usual copper pedestal. It cannot be an image of the Devī, as it is a male figure, holding a lotus and a rosary in its hands. It wears a high *mukuṭa* of piled-up hair, while long ringlets float down on the shoulders;

40 Vogel, *A.S.R.* 1902-03, p. 239 ff., fig. 3; *Antiquities,* p. 140, 145 ff., pls. VIIa and X.

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a diadem is placed on the forehead, ending above the ears in two small flowers and rising above the temples in two high pinnacles. The eyes are inlaid with silver. Probably this bust represents the same deity as Balabhadravarman's similar brass image at Harsar near Brahmor, i.e. Śiva [41]. Its style is characteristically Kashmiri, and stands very near to the Sūrya reliefs of Martand. It must, therefore, belong to the reign of Ājyavarman, or soon after.

Only slightly later we have to place two copper statuettes of *yoginīs,* attendants of the Great Goddess. They are rather short, stout figures, with excessively short



Fig. 10



Fig. 11

legs and small feet, a fat body and big head, and with two large staring eyes and an awkward smile (Fig. 10 and 11). And yet they do not belong to primitive art; on the contrary, they are representatives, though degenerated and provincial, of a highly refined tradition. The treatment of anatomy and postures, the beautifully chiselled costume, the hair style, the jewelry diadems, the silver-inlaid eyes, the oval halo, the type of the pedestal, all this places them still in the late Gupta tradition, and yet the stout roundness of the figures already has all the rural earthiness of early Pāla and Pratihāra art. Moreover, the excessively short legs, small feet, big heads are characteristic features of the dissolution of every

41 Vogel, *Antiquities* p. 251 f., pls. XXXIX*b,* XL.

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late style; the artist still knows how to do every individual part, but has lost the sense of the whole, and accentuates the various parts of the figure according to their interest, naturally emphasizing the head and eyes as the centres of expression. We may, therefore, interpret these figures as products of the transitional style from Gupta to medieval art and may place them in the period of indirect Pāla influence, via the dependent Āyudha kingdom of Kanauj, a vassal of which the Brahmor State must have been in the years between the fall of the Kashmir empire of Lalitāditya and the Tibetan ("Kīra") invasion. In this respect they are contemporaneous with the Pāla bronzes which have repeatedly been found in Kulu.

e) The Markulā Devī (Kālī) Temple at Markulā-Udaipur in Lahul.

Margul or Mārul [42], ancient Markulā, is a village in Chamba-Lahul, at the junction of the Maiyar Nala with the Chandrabhaga. About 1695 it was renamed Udaipur, when raja Udai Singh (1690-1720) raised it to the status of a district centre in the part of Lahul which his father Chattar (or Śatru) Singh (1664-1690) had annexed to the Chamba State. The place is not of much interest, except for its unique temple of Kālī, called Markulā Devī after the name of the village.

Like the shrines already discussed, it does not look impressive from outside, as its exterior shell, exposed to all the inclemencies of a climate hardly better than that of the Tibetan highlands, had to be renewed time and again (Plate X). It stands on a mountain slope, the usual structure of rubble filled-in between wooden rafters (33 by 23 ft. inside; 12 ft. high), on the south side resting on a platform (6 ft. 7 in. high), on the north side almost dug into the hill, as the interval between the wall and the hill has been filled-up with stones and earth, probably in order to reduce the danger from snow pressure and avalanches. In its western half there is the sanctuary proper, a cella (10 ft. 4 in. by 10 ft. 6 in. outside) detached from the enclosing wall by a circumambulation passage; the eastern half is occupied by a *maṇḍapa* with a broad balcony window on the south side and a ceiling supported by six pillars. The entrance is on the east side. The whole temple is covered with a steep gable roof (17 ft. high) of shingles, which over the sanctuary proper rises to a height of 45 feet above the ground in a steep pyramid (26 ft. 5 in. high), resembling the *śikhara* of Hindu temples in the plains. Curiously enough, all the roofs are asymmetrically constructed, leaning over to the north, perhaps in order to increase the capacity of resistance to possible avalanches.

The interior, however, presents one of the most extraordinary views. The

42 Vogel, *Antiquities*, p. 15; *Chamba Gaz.*, p. 43 ff.

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richness and interest of the carvings exceed the monuments of both Brahmor and Chatrarhi, though the artistic quality cannot compare with them. Even a first survey reveals that the deodar wood carvings do not all belong to the same period, but may be roughly divided into an earlier and a later group. The first comprises the façade of the shrine, the ceiling panels of the *maṇḍapa* and the four main pillars supporting that ceiling. To the latter must be reckoned the panels on both sides of the window, the architraves of the ceiling, two additional pillars on the west side, opposite the sanctum, and the two huge *dvārapāla* (Bhairava) statues (6 ft. 4 in. high) flanking the façade of the sanctum.

Let us first study the second group, as it is the less interesting one. The two *dvārapālas* are rather crude work, looking even worse, as they are smeared with the blood of the goats and rams sacrificed to the goddess. Much richer are the reliefs of the four architraves, representing various scenes from the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*[43], likewise in a rather crude, though somewhat better style. Unfortunately they are so situated that it proved impossible to photograph them.

Eastern Side (from right to left): At the end of the beam a framing pillar almost looking like a castle. Two warriors standing on their chariots, drawn by four horses each, and shooting arrows one at the other. In front of the right chariot is a standard with a monkey figure (Kapidhvaja), and behind the warrior there sits god Vishṇu-Kṛishṇa on his *vāhana* Garuḍa; the warrior, therefore, must be the hero Arjuna; his opponent who is taking an arrow from his quiver, probably is Karṇa, the son of Sūrya. Between the two there stands a tower-like structure, beneath which two foot-soldiers are fighting each other with sword and shield. The next scene depicts a double row of animals, one row placed on top of the other, each consisting of three bullocks, two horses and two camels, with a driver behind; perhaps the capture of king Virāṭa's cattle by the Kauravas (*Gohaṛaṇaparvan*). In the last scene a warrior is shooting an arrow from his chariot at five opponents (in similar position, but seen from the back); between them there are two cows and four flying birds, placed one above the other. The scene probably represents Duryodhana or some other Kaurava hero (Droṇa, Karṇa or Suśarman, king of Trigarta) attacking the five Pāṇḍavas. The treatment of the warrior on the chariot is peculiar, and seems inspired by some idol of Sūrya. The gigantic hero, with the charioteer in front, stands on a diminutive chariot, a platform resting on two high poles with lotus-shaped wheels, the horses being squeezed between these two poles. At the end of the beam again a tower-like pillar.

Western side: This relief frieze, likewise framed by tower-shaped pillars,

43 The scenes have been identified by Dr. Vogel.

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represents scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* (*Sundarakāṇḍa* and *Yuddhakāṇḍa*), from right to left. Two rows of five figures each, the foremost being Rāma and Lakshmaṇa, armed with bow and arrow, the others monkeys. The two small monkeys in front of Rāma probably represent Hanuman twice, when receiving Rāma's message to Sītā, and preparing for his leap to Laṅkā. In the next scene Hanuman, now large-sized, is seen jumping from the top of Mount Mahendra across the ocean, indicated by a pair of fishes, to Laṅkā; with one left hand he carries a piece of the mountain, with the right one he holds his tail, while the other hands are empty; this scene refers to a later incident in the epic when Hanuman brings the whole mountain with its medicinal herbs, in order to heal Lakshmaṇa who had been seriously wounded by Rāvaṇa's lance. In the following scene Hanuman, again a small animal, is visible in the trees of the *aśoka* grove of Laṅkā; then he climbs a tree under which a woman with a vessel, evidently Rāma's abducted wife Sītā is sitting, while in a separate compartment three females are represented, probably the Rākshasa women attending on and keeping guard over Sītā. In the next scene Hanuman addresses Sītā who sits on a couch, attended by the Rākshasīs, one of them waving a *chāmara* (yaktail-flywhisk). In the centre of the architrave a large building of several storeys, evidently intended to symbolize Laṅkā town, is depicted and, on its roof, Hanuman, his tail aflame. The punishment inflicted by the Rākshasas on Hanuman now turns into the disaster of Laṅkā, the burning of the demon town. In the following scene Hanuman, sitting on the top of a pillar, addresses the giant Rākshasa king Rāvaṇa, with his ten heads (the uppermost one that of a horse), four feet and twenty arms swinging various weapons. On both sides a group of two demons forms the king's bodyguard. The last scene shows the awakening of Kumbhakarṇa, several people beating drums and cymbals and blowing trumpets at his ears while elephants are driven over his body.

Northern side (from right to left): The Svayaṁvara of Draupadī (*Mahābhārata, Ādiparvan*). First king Drupada of Pañchāla and his queen are seated on a throne, attended, on each side, by a female with a *chāmara*. On both sides the Pāṇḍavas are standing, on the right three of them, two with a sword, one with a mace (Bhīma), and on the left two, one with a sword, the other with a bow and arrow (Arjuna). In the next scene the king is again seated on his throne, attended by a *chāmara* bearer, who is raising a jewel(?)-box with his left hand. Opposite the king stands a lady with folded hands, apparently his daughter Draupadī; a man touches her left arm as if to lead her away, while a box and a string of pearls are depicted above her. In the third scene an archer (Arjuna) shoots an arrow straight upwards, thus piercing a fish on a pole. In the fourth scene the

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successful Arjuna bends his bow, and in front of him another, kneeling figure (Kṛishṇa?) touches with his left hand the lower end of the bow. Over the latter figure there is a small representation of the four-armed Vishṇu on Garuḍa, perhaps in order to indicate that the kneeling figure is indeed the incarnation of Vishṇu. In the fifth scene five persons stand in a row, each with a staff in his right and a parasol in his left hand (like the Vāmana *avatāra* on the window relief). The sixth group depicts the *rājābhisheka,* the anointment of the new king, attended by four priests of whom one is pouring water from a vessel over his head and another is fanning him. Another person, to the left of the group, salutes the king with raised arm. In the last scene Arjuna(?), standing on his war chariot, fights with three opponents, probably Karṇa, Bhīshma and Śalya.

Finally, to this group of later wood carvings the two big relief panels on both sides of the balcony window should be reckoned (Plate XVI). They are treated as the shafts of pilasters, rising from a base and ending in a capital (6 ft. 8 in. high, 2 in. broad).

The relief on the eastern side represents the Trivikrama *avatāra* of Vishṇu. He is the chief figure, dominating with his outstretched legs two thirds of the whole scene. The extended toes of his right foot touch the snake godlings (Nāgas) of the Nether Region (Pātāla), whereas his left leg, swung up with overwhelming energy, reaches Brahmā in the heaven of the gods. Beneath Trivikrama, Vishṇu's initial disguise as a dwarfish (*Vāmana*) brahmin is depicted, standing modestly, a parasol in his left hand, before the Asura king Bali, who sits on a small throne in his audience hall, the entrance of which is guarded by two almost nude warriors carrying sword and shield. Vāmana requests Bali for as much ground as he might cover with three steps, and Bali solemnly confirms the gift by pouring water from a (now broken) sacrificial vessel. Suddenly the disguise falls, and the god, a terror of tense energy, three-headed (lion, human and boar face) and four-armed, with all the attributes of his power, the royal diadem (Gandhāra-Kashmiri type), disk and lotus, mace and conch, seizes the three worlds. His lower foot passes over the richly decorated border of the panel at the bottom wherein two Nāga kings, with many-headed cobra-hoods, swing their human upper bodies on the double coils of their lower snake tails. Both are four-armed, but three of the lower arms unfortunately are broken, while one upper arm touches Trivikrama's foot. The symbols still preserved are not quite clear, but emphasize their chthonic character: two ploughs, a fruit and a staff or bow. In the upper region the gods are grouped in three rows, of which, however, the two lower ones are interrupted by an unfinished patch. This is said once to have been covered by a round metal mirror which was stolen in one of the invasions coming down the valley from the

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direction of Kulu (probably somewhere between 1650 and 1670). The gods are not easy to identify, and apparently the sculptor and his priestly advisers have not been too well acquainted with the intricacies of Hindu iconography[44]. The big figure in the right upper corner, near Trivikrama's left foot, must be Brahmā, three-faced (the fourth face at the back being invisible), sitting, with his staff, a rosary and water-vessel on two *haṁsas.* But his heads, not bearded (as it would generally be the custom in North Indian art) rather evoke the appearance of Śiva. The next figure, holding a trident, a rosary (*akshamālā*) and a vessel, sits on two parrots. Whereas the trident and rosary are symbols of Śiva, the parrot is the *vāhana* of Kāma. The next figure, sitting on a buffalo, carries the scull-sceptre of Śiva, but Śiva generally has no flag emblem (perhaps Yama?). The last figure in the top row, with sword and shield, sits, cross-legged, on a prostrate *yaksha* and might, therefore, be Kubera; but the iconographic description again does not work out. In the second row only one figure is clear: a four-armed god, carrying a bow and a lotusflower, an axe (or plough) and a conch, possibly Balarāma. The scarf of the next, destroyed, figure might indicate Vāyu. The identification of the third figure is doubtful. But in the lowermost row Sūrya is recognizable, cowering on his chariot drawn by seven horses.

The details of the panel on the opposite (western) side of the window are hardly less confusing, though its general meaning likewise is clear: the Churning of the Ocean (*Amṛitamanthana*) and the Defeat of the Asuras (*Mahābhārata, Ādiparvan; Rāmāyaṇa, Bālakāṇḍa*). The panel is divided into seven rows of figures, of which the sixth and part of the fifth describe the myth itself, while the upper rows depict the world of the gods, the lowermost one the underworld (*Pātāla*) of the defeated demons. In the sixth row the mountain Mandara, resembling a bunch of sprigs, is placed on the back of the Tortoise (*Kūrmāvatāra* of Vishṇu) seen in front. The snake-king Vāsuki is slung around it, held by two gods in the same and two in the preceding row, and, on the other side, by a sitting Asura (Rāhu?), whose attention, however, is preoccupied with a game, the pawns of which are standing between him and another sitting figure. All these figures wear crowns and royal or divine costumes. In the bottom row there are

44 Hindu iconography of the Muslim period has to be approached from an angle different from that valid for the pre-Muslim Middle Ages. Whereas during the Middle Ages (8-13th centuries) iconographic details had mirrored various theological trends and, therefore, had a distinct meaning, Northern Indian Hindu art under Muslim rule represented a conscious revival of a lost tradition. Imagery was a reconstruction, and its manyfold types merely an expression of antiquarian pride or a hardly understood convention. Errors and mistakes are very common, and often enough the artist has just followed his own imagination. Attempts at classifying such "problematic" images, therefore, are useless. This is the case especially in the Himalaya where the standard of Sanskrit scholarship was rather low in the 16th and 17th centuries.

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five more kneeling, bitterly lamenting figures which look as if originally they had been intended to represent women. The centre of the fifth row is occupied by the wooden frame of a round metal mirror, a likewise lost counterpart to that which once had been mounted on the Trivikrama panel. To its left some of the costly objects which emerged during the churning are depicted, the wish-fulfilling tree (Kalpadruma), Indra's elephant Airāvata, and a crosslegged figure, possibly Dhanvantari, the physician of the gods, with the *amṛita*-vessel. The four upper rows are occupied by the gods; but, with a single exception, only the fourth row depicts individual deities. In the centre Śiva, three-headed and four-armed (emblems: trident and rosary, mirror and fruit) sits on his bull, at his side Pārvatī, crowned and dressed in skirt and scarf, stands combing his hair. At her feet her lion is lying. To the extreme left there stands a crowned figure, perhaps Vīrabhadra, holding a trident and a fruit (or flower or mirror?) in his two upper hands, his two other hands have been broken. To the right of Śiva Kārttikeya, six-headed (*Shaṇmukha*) and four-armed (emblems: trident, not a lance! rosary and vessel) sits on his peacock, and on the extreme right stands a man playing an ancient Indian harp, apparently the sage Nārada. The upper three rows consist, each, of five male figures sitting with crossed legs, wearing a crown, raising their right hand in *abhayamudrā* and in the left holding some divine emblem, a trident, a staff decorated with a scull, a plough, a flower, a flag, an arrow, a battle-axe, a sword, etc. Only the figure in the right upper corner wears no crown, and its big head, with protruding eyes and a broad grinning mouth is severed from the body. In the left corner, on the other hand, stands a young figure in "archer" (*ālīḍha*) position, carrying in his four hands a disk, a flowerbud(?), a mace and a conch. This must be Vishṇu while the figure at the other corner must be Rāhu. This justifies some conclusions as to the other thirteen figures: the Navagraha and the four Lokapālas, which we have already encountered on the lintel of the Chatrarhi temple. But Rāhu belongs to the Navagraha group.

Now we can turn to the study of the earlier woodcarvings, in the first place those on the ceiling of the *maṇḍapa.* This ceiling consists of nine panels of unequal size and shape, of which eight (four smaller squares, 2 ft. 8 in., decorated with a conventional lotus, and four oblong rectangles, 8 ft. 5 in., resp. 7 ft. 7 in. by 2 ft. 8 in., with figural scenes) form a border enclosing the great centre-piece (8 ft. 5 in. by 7 ft. 7 in.). The latter (Plate XIII) is of the same "lantern" type as in the Lakshaṇā and Śakti temples, i.e. by means of two sets of four triangular corner pieces, each decorated with ornamental borders and highly stylized *kīrti-mukha* masks and *makaras,* the opening to be covered by the centre-piece is reduced to a quarter of the original surface, the last aperture being closed by a square panel

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carved into a gigantic lotus-rosette of very high relief, a masterpiece of woodcarving. The spandrils between this rosette and the corners of the quadrangle are filled with reliefs of flying godlings. The rosette proper consists of four circles of petals enclosing a centre-piece with another border of petals. But these petals are so much stylized into various ornamental patterns that only in one circle would their original character be evident outside the context of the whole. And in one circle the petals have even been replaced by a chain of *vajras* (thunderbolts) of the traditional type well known in Lamaistic art.

The most interesting pieces of the ceiling, however, are the four figural panels on the east, south, west and north sides. That on the eastern side (Plate XIV*a*) is again subdivided by a raised border into a frieze of four larger, almost square panels and a much smaller frieze of five partitions, three filled with figures, two with lotus-rosettes. The four square panels in the upper frieze are decorated with flying couples of Gandharvas. Apparently they sit on big lotus flowers, but as the artist seems to have encountered some difficulty in squeezing the thrown-backward legs of the godlings into the square panels, this has been merely a device to indicate that they are not on the ground but in heaven. For the lotus under a deity or semi-divine being plays in Indian and Buddhist art also outside India the same role as the cloud cushions in Christian paintings. Moreover, the sculptor had to accommodate the Apsarases on the Gandharvas' left knees, though their relationship varies considerably, some behaving very "respectably", others indulging in amorous intimacies. The Gandharvas are, all, four-armed, embracing and patting their mates, and holding various objects, crowns, bracelets, jewels or *chāmaras.* They wear the princely costume of the late Gupta period, the Gandharvas big wigs and wreaths, the goddesses crowns, and all of them necklaces, bracelets and beautifully decorated *dhotīs* and skirts. The three lower figural friezes consist of musicians playing a flute (*vaṁsī*) and cymbals, and of dancers in lively poses and early medieval costumes.

The southern panel (Plate XIV*b*) resembles the preceding one both in the general arrangement and the subject. But the Gandharvas and Apsarases of the four upper square panels play a somewhat different part. The two six-armed Gandharvas in the central panels are busy with the *pūjā* of a small *Śivaliṅga* which is placed on a stand mounted on the back of a Nandi which, again, rests on a lotus-cushion pedestal with four legs. With their six arms they pour ghee on the *liṅga,* fan it with a *chāmara,* burn incense, ring the *vajra*-bell, hold a box of saffron powder or a scull. The Apsarases accompanying them play the cymbals or the early Indian harp. The couples in the lateral panels are just making the music to the *pūjā.* These Gandharvas, four-armed, play the early Indian bow-

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harp (*vaidūryadaṇḍā vīṇā*) and the staff cithara (*kairātā vīṇā*). In their other hands they hold the same symbols as the godlings on the eastern ceiling panel, i.e. *chāmara,* crown, bracelets, etc., while the Apsarases accompany them with cymbals. The smaller lower frieze consists of only one panel filled with sixteen tiny musicians and dancers. The danceposes are those of the classical Bhārata Nāṭya, the musical instruments a conch trumpet (*śaṅkha*), cymbals, hautboy (*sānayī*), violin (*sāraṅgī* or *sāriṇḍā*), flute (*vaṁśī*), straight drum (*pakhāvaja*), hourglass drum (*ḍamaru*) and convex drum (*mṛidaṅga* or *ḍholaka*) [45].

The western ceiling panel (Plate XV*b*) is likewise divided into an upper and a lower frieze. But the upper frieze consists of only one monumental Śaiva panel [46], whereas the bottom frieze is filled by thirteen *gaṇas* dancing to the accompaniment of a *mṛidaṅga* and *pakhāvaja* drum. The central figures are Śiva Naṭarāja and Gaurī, accompanied by five minor figures. Śiva plays a staff cithara and swings his other fourteen arms in the dance, stamping the ground with two feet, and beating time with two other ones. The ten-armed goddess, dancing by his side, swings in her hands a trident and elephant-goad, sacrificial knife, skull-staff, cobra, and sacrificial vessel. On both sides, to the right and left, there stand two male figures, three-eyed like Śiva and his consort and four-armed, apparently the alter egos of Śiva, the "Bhairavas" who not rarely are shown accompanying him. That on the left, separated from Śiva Naṭarāja by the diminutive bull Nandi, holds a trident, rosary, mirror and fruit; that on the right a mace(?) and skull-drum (*ḍamaru*), a skull-staff (*khaṭvāṅga*) and cobra. Both ends of the panel are occupied by Śiva's and Pārvatī's family, on the right probably Vīrabhadra with skull-staff dancing wildly, on the left Gaṇeśa, four-armed and with his usual emblems, sitting by the side of the Devī's lion, and, below, Kārttikeya(?), a skull-staff in his hand. Generally the costume is very similar to that of the preceding reliefs. The Devī and the Bhairava to the left wear a crown, Śiva the *jaṭāmukuṭa* (pile of matted hair), and the Bhairava to the right as well as Vīrabhadra a crown of skulls, the *gaṇas* "Gupta" wigs [47].

45 Curt Sachs, *Die Musikinstrumente Indiens und Indonesiens,* Berlin-Leipzig 1923 (2nd ed.).

46 V. A. Smith, *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon.* Oxford 1911, p. 366, pl. LXXX. The author with reference to the western panel suggests the ninth or tenth century as its date but admits the possibility of the seventh century on account of the wig-like hairdressing, worn by the little demons (*gaṇa*) in the lower band of the frieze.

47 Hardly any of the figures in this ceiling or in the façade of the shrine fits exactly into the conventional iconographic classifications. But a consultation of the hitherto known iconographic texts reveals considerable differences between various parts of India. Kashmiri Hinduism, however, deviates in so many respects from the cults prevalent in the rest of India that we have to expect also considerable iconographic peculiarities. In the present state of our knowledge we are not yet in a position to define these and have to content ourselves with such observations as the accessible material permits us to make.

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Curiously enough the ceiling panel on the northern side (Plate XV*a*) is of an utterly different character. For it represents the "Assault of Māra" (*Māra-dharshaṇa,* cp. *Lalitavistara,* XXI; *Buddhacharita,* XIII) [48]. In the centre the Buddha sits on the diamond throne (*vajrāsana*) at Bodh Gayā, impassive, merely calling the earth-goddess to witness (*bhūmisparśa-mudrā*) his victory over the Lord of Lust and Death. On both sides a group of two daughters of Māra is trying to arouse his sexual desires by provocative poses. In front four demons try to overthrow the diamond throne with the aid of tridents, but these break in the effort. Others hold snakes over his head, and others blow trumpets into his ears. A host of demons, some with human, others with animal heads, make a hellish noise with drums and cymbals, staff-citharas and violins. To the left Māra himself approaches on a curious war-chariot (very similar to that on the eastern architrave), a platform standing on posts with lotus wheels drawn by four lions(?), and shoots the arrow of sinful love at the Buddha. He is accompanied by two of his daughters, sitting cross-legged on little pedestals. On the opposite side we see the same chariot, but the lions roll on the ground in utter confusion, and Māra has collapsed in despair, letting his bow and arrow sink down, while his daughters try to comfort him. Apart from the subject, however, the panel does not differ from the preceding one; costumes and other details, technique and style are the same.

The façade of the Markulā Devī shrine is the richest and most intricate of all those we have discussed (Plates XI-XII). The outermost set of doorjambs is each divided into three arched niches of varying type. Those at the bottom (supported by miniature *yakshas* between two lions) have a complicated gable of late Kashmiri type, with a centre-piece like the pinnacle of a *stūpa* or temple and with peacocks in the corners and *kinnaras* above the gable ends. In these very elongated niches (3 ft. 6 in.) Gaṅgā stands on the left side on her *makara,* holding in her four hands a vessel, rosary, book and a long lotus stalk, and on the right side Yamunā on her tortoise, with similar emblems in her four hands. The next set of niches is much smaller (1 ft. 10 in. high) and ends in big *kīrtimukha* masks evolving from the foliage of the arches. That on the left encloses a standing four-armed figure holding a lance, lotus and watervessel, whereas one hand rests on the hip. The figure in the right niche is its exact counterpart, although with many small differentiations. The top niches, ending in foliage scrolls, are again somewhat lower (1′ 8″ high) and enclose rather stout, likewise four-armed figures, the one on the left side holding a trident, rosary, mirror and a fruit (*sītāphala* =

48 J. Griffiths, *The Paintings in the Buddhist Cave Temples of Ajanta,* London 1896, I, pl. VIII.

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custard apple), and the other a *makara*-staff, a skull-bowl, a skull-staff and a symbol now lost. It deserves notice that these two figures have the same emblems as the satellites flanking the dancing Śiva and Pārvatī in the western panel of the ceiling. Next comes a frieze composed of flowers strung up in an Indian wreath, then another border with flame or lotus-petal design.

The next set of door-jambs, naturally much smaller, consists of five niches on each side, four ending in scrollwork arches, the topmost in a horizontal lintel, on which a broad capital of Roman-Kashmiri type rests. In these niches the ten *avatāras* of Vishṇu are arranged, on the left (from bottom upwards) Matsya (fish); Narasiṁha (four-armed); Vāmana with staff and parasol; Kṛishṇa as Vishṇu with lion, human and boar head, and four arms holding the usual attributes; and at the top, Buddha in *bhūmisparśa-mudrā*; on the right Kūrma (tortoise); Varāha boar-headed and four-armed; Paraśurāma, with battle-axe and *yajñopavīta*; Rāma, with bow and arrow; and, on top, Kalki on horseback, a battle-axe in his right hand.

There follows another richly carved, round moulding and a frieze decorated with a winding creeper. The inner jambs, likewise ending in late Kashmiri capitals, are divided by flower scrolls into four medallions, each framing the figure of a dancing Apsaras. Finally a frieze of scroll-work frames the door of the sanctuary proper.

The lintel, capped by the ornamented mouldings next to the extreme doorjambs, connects the highest niches and capitals of the middle set of jambs. It consists of five miniature chapels separated by a screen of short "pillars" dissolving into plaitwork ornaments (or interlaced snakes?). Each chapel consists of an image niche enclosed by a depressed arch resting on two slim fluted columns, while on the crown of the arch a *kalaśa* ending in a high pinnacle stands; this niche again is covered by a towering gable, either of the Kashmiri type, i.e. two superposed capped triangles, with a bird in each of the lateral corners, and an *āmalaka* on top; or of a more archaic type, a central ogival vault resting on two short pillars, and two lateral half-vaults, i.e. the front of an early Buddhist *chaitya*-hall. In the niches five deities are seated, cross-legged (from left to right): 1) a crowned four-armed god on a lion, holding a staff and rosary, vessel, and hand in *abhaya-mudrā*; 2) a similar deity, but with attributes inverted; 3) a crowned four-armed god sitting on Garuḍa, holding arrow and trident, vessel and battle-axe; 4) a figure without crown, big head, protruding eyes and grinning mouth, sitting on a lion, holding staff and sword, trident and shield (possibly Rāhu); 5) a crowned, two-armed god sitting on a prostrate *yaksha,* one hand holding a staff, the other in *tarjanī-mudrā* (threatening). The chapel gables project from a frieze of *haṁsas*

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(geese) carrying a long pearl string in their beaks; this frieze is continued over the capitals of the middle jambs.

The lower lintel, resting on the capitals of the innermost doorjambs, consists of three similar, but somewhat bigger chapels, connected by decorative dwarf pillars either dissolving into plaitwork, or consisting of coupled slim columns connected by a diaper covering the whole length and breadth of the shaft. The crowned, four-armed deity sitting cross-legged, on a ram, in the left chapel, holds two tridents, a sceptre and a water vessel; the central one, over seven rearing horses, is the sungod Sūrya, holding a sceptre and a vessel; the crowned figure in the right chapel again sits on a lion, holding sword and sceptre, shield and water vessel in its four hands. Dr. Vogel identifies the deities in the eight chapels with the group of *Grahas,* regularly placed over the entrance of Hindu temples, although their usual number is nine.

Beneath this lintel is another frieze of five single figures projecting from the ornamental friezes between the capitals of the innermost doorjambs and round the cella door. The prominent central carving again represents the sungod on his chariot drawn by seven horses. The others show Gandharvas, playing cymbals, bow-harp and staff-cithara, and must be regarded as the musicians accompanying the dance of the Apsarases in the panels of the adjoining door jambs.

The silver idol of Kālī, in her aspect as Mahishamardinī [49], probably is contemporary with the later woodcarvings on the architraves and window panels, but of a very different type. An inscription in late Śāradā characters on the pedestal states that it was cast by one Pañjamānaka Jīnaka from Bhadravāh in the Sāstra(?) year 4645 = A.D. 1569-70 and dedicated by Ṭhākur Hīmapāla. It is a rather primitive and clumsy work, despite its elaborate character. For the goddess is represented eight-armed, standing on the defeated buffalo-demon whom her threefold lion attacks from behind. To the right stands a small figure of the donor, a caricature of similar statuettes in Rājasthān. But the bodies of the goddess and of the buffalo look bloated, notwithstanding the thin legs and arms. Kālī's head is much too big, and her *mukuṭa* looks rather like the ceremonial crown of a Tibetan lama, her girdle like that of a Lamaistic terrible deity. The enclosing frame suggests brass idols of the 15th and 16th centuries from Rājasthān, the top of it the backs of early Mughal thrones. The influence of Mughal and Rajput art is not surprising in the 16th century; it penetrated probably via Balor which then had some control over Bhadravāh; the Tibetan element is understandable in a frontier-area where the Tibetan Lahulis venerate Markulā Devī as rDo-rje phag-mo (Sanskrit Vajravārāhī).

49 Vogel, *Antiquities,* p. 249 ff., pls. XXXIV*c,* XL.

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CHAPTER VI

THE STYLE AND ARTISTIC HISTORY OF THE EARLY TEMPLES IN THE FORMER CHAMBA STATE

We are now sufficiently acquainted with all the details of the main monuments of the ancient Brahmapura kingdom, to venture upon a critical analysis of their style and of their position in the history of Indian art. Vague as the local temple traditions are, they prove to be fundamentally correct. Chatrarhi is claimed to be the earliest cult centre of all the three [1], but the temple proper is said to have been erected by the same master, Gugga, who had previously built the Lakshaṇā temple at Brahmor. And the Markulā Devī temple in Chamba-Lahul is stated to be younger than that of Chatrarhi, but older than the famous Hiṛmā temple at Manali in Kulu; yet the master artisan who had constructed the Manali temple, is likewise reported to have built, at a later date, the temple of Markulā Devī. But this contradiction is merely apparent as we have already observed that the sculptures of the Markulā temple belong to two sets of widely differing ages.

In analyzing the Lakshaṇā Devī temple at Brahmor, we have, first, to keep in mind that it is no longer in its original condition. The interior evidently is more or less intact, but the exterior shell is modern, and there are sound reasons for the conclusion that the present façade is a quite arbitrary later reconstruction.

The gable does not fit in at all. It is too small, so that carved planks had to be added on both sides in order to bring its breadth approximately in harmony with the pediment; but these planks do not really fit, especially at the bottom where the *yaksha* frieze proves that the gable must once have rested on an even narrower support. The style of the gable is utterly different from the rest of the façade, representing the rich mixed Kanauj-Kashmiri style which flourished in the empire of Lalitāditya (middle 8th century). And finally the image of Vishṇu could never occupy the main gable of a Devī temple. As already observed, the gable must be the last remnant of the Narasiṁha temple erected in the reign of Ājyavarman by the exiled Brahmins from Kanauj, and salvaged from the destruction of the Kīra-Tibetan invasion.

It is not less doubtful if the pediment originally belonged to the façade.

[1] According to one tradition it was already founded by Mūshūṇa. Though the historical value of such a statement is not great, it shows at least that the cult place existed before Meruvarman's reign.

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Though in its size it fits tolerably well on the entrance façade, it is a completely separate piece, and its projecting ends look as if once they had been intended not to anchor it in a wall, but to dovetail with other beams joining it at a right angle from the back. Moreover, in Kulu where alone the same art tradition is still alive, though in much later repetitions, we have nowhere any façade with such a pediment. Instead, there is a window on top, similar to those on both sides, and this arrangement would be in harmony with a not uncommon practice in the late Gupta period, a window on top of the entrance lighting up the idol in the sanctuary [2]. But a decoration of the same type as our pediment (though of course, in 16th century or later taste) is common in Kulu around the lowermost storey of the "pagoda" crowning the sanctuary proper. It seems, therefore, most probable that only the broad door-frame once embellished the façade of the Lakshaṇā temple, as is the case also at Chatrarhi; the *maṇḍapa* had a considerably lower gable roof; and above the *garbhagṛiha* there rose a "pagoda" of several roofs decorated, in the storey between the roof of the *pradakshiṇā-patha* and the first tower roof, with a sculptured decoration on all four sides, of which the present pediment is the only surviving remnant. This explains also the gradual projection of the carved niches and bracket-figures of the pediment. For a similar projection is found in corresponding reliefs on the wooden temples of Nepal.

As already stated, this temple type is not characteristic of the Himalaya, though the abundant supply of wood there has indubitably made possible its survival. Like the similar temples in Nepal and Malabar, the Chinese pagodas and the Merus of Bali, it is a last remnant of a Gupta tradition. And as all the woodcarvings of the Lakshaṇā, Śakti and Markulā Devī temples imitate forms otherwise known to us from stone monuments, we are in a position to compare them in detail and draw our conclusions as to their position in the Gupta tradition. Or rather the other way round: as this special phase of Gupta art, i.e. that of the age of Harshavardhana of Thanesar, and shortly thereafter, is very little known, we can interpret the Lakshaṇā Devī temple as an, imported, rare monument of that special style.

Let us first study the architectural details: The framework of the entrance, with its sequence of receding flat and round mouldings, figural doorjambs and lintels, is characteristically Gupta; yet it differs from older similar entrances by the greater number and richer differentiation of lintels and jambs, a richer scrollwork decoration with oval tendril spirals (as at Masrur) instead of circular ones. The figures on the jambs are more detached from the background and stand on more projecting brackets (as at Masrur) than in earlier monuments. The

[2] It is the last remnant of the large *chaityagṛiha* window of the early Buddhist caves.

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groups of Gandharvas on the lintels are more closely knit; instead of one Gandharva or Apsaras flying behind the other, each Gandharva is bearing an Apsaras on his back (as also in the ceiling slabs of the Durgā temple at Aihole, second quarter 7th century; or at Masrur, early 8th century). A new feature, however, is the crown which the two central groups are holding up. The *kīrtimukha* mask in the centre of the innermost lintel is not characteristic of earlier Gupta art, but common in the 7th and early 8th centuries (Aihole, Badami, Pattadakal, Manali, Jageśwar), and last but not least in the art of Greater India (the "Kāla" of Java). The lions in the corners have replaced *mithunas* (amorous couples) previously occupying those spots (Bhumara, Ajanta, Aurangabad); their posture still reminds us of those on the Pallava (Mamallapuram, Conjeeveram [3]) and Chālukya (Pāpanātha at Pattadakal) monuments [4] (7th-early 8th centuries) in which the first had become popular. The friezes on the lowest pediment storey correspond to the cornice of the Viśvakarmā cave at Ellora (ca. 600) [5]. The niches of the second storey are similar to those at Bhumara [6], those with *makara* heads on the capital brackets, reminding us of Sarnath, Ajanta (XIX), Pattadakal, Ellora, but those of the top storey reveal some influence of the Gandhāra tradition; the threefold miniature pediments above the seated figures of the middle storey recur in the Pāpanātha, more developed in the later temples of Pattadakal, the Daśāvatāra at Ellora, Osian, the Telī-kā-Mandir at Gwalior, and Bajaura. The pot-and-foliage capitals, still in transition from cushion capitals with a rich abacus and interlinking figures or wreath at Ajanta (I, chapel outside XIX), Aurangabad (III), Ellora (IX and XII), still combined with a lotus half-roundel, at Jhelam [7], Jageśvar, Bilaspur (Shaṇmukheśvar), Nirmand [8], Bajaura and Babbor-Thalora [9] are already fully developed. The predilection for strings of pearls as ornamentation and, in the last instance pearl jewelry, is also characteristic of the late Gupta period and dominates the later Ajanta murals too. The over-slim proportion of all figures also had been a characteristic fashion of the 7th century, whether with the successors of the Guptas, the Chalukyas of Badami, the Pallavas or the Kushān-Sasanians (Fondukistan and Bamiyan), only the Gurjara kingdoms of western India forming an exception with Mongoloid figures (again dis-

3 A. H. Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture,* Part II, 1928, (*Memoir A.S.I.,* no. 33) pls. XIV, XIX, XXII, XXIII, XXVI, XXVII.
4 H. Cousens, *Chalukyan Architecture,* 1926, pl. L.
5 A. Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.,* pl. XXXIX, fig. 155; etc.
6 R. D. Banerji, *The Temple of Śiva at Bhumara,* Calcutta 1924.
7 A. Cunningham, *A.S.R.* XIV, p. 41, pl. XVI.
8 A. H. Francke, *op. cit.,* I, pl. III*b*.
9 R. Ch. Kak, *Ind. Art & Letters,* n.s. VII, p. 65, pl. IX.

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carded between the 8th and 9th century). Our figures however reveal a strength which is lacking in most of the work of this period. In contrast to these slim figures, the dwarfs were in accordance with the taste of this period, as is proved by Ajanta, Aihole, Badami [10], and Gop.

Taken all together we get a picture of Gupta art such as we should expect on the basis of other considerations. The perfect harmony of the classic style is generally followed by a pompous, ponderous and yet in some way introvert style ("Baroque"), to be superseded by a light and rather frivolous, but very cultured elegance ("Rococo"), then by a reckless and rakish mannerism ending in the dissolution of the style. In Gupta art, the 5th century represents the classical, the 6th the Baroque, the 7th the Rococo, the early 8th the last glorious mannerism, the later 8th century the dissolution and transition into the Pratihāra and Pāla styles. At Brahmor we are confronted with the third of these phases, much more involved, much more lavishly decorated, with stronger movement, light and shadow effects, than classic Gupta art, but light and elegant, and already on the way to the mannerism of the early 8th century. In its contents also this style differs from classic Gupta art. The iconography has been more systematized; where in the 5th century we find only groups of undefined deities, now an elaborate hierarchy of higher and lower gods and goddesses is spread out over the façade, brackets, etc. New forms appear which, so far, we know only from the Pallava and Chāḷukya kingdoms of the South. Whether they really had been imported from there, we can not say at present; they might equally well have come into fashion in the South under late Gupta influence; for at least in the Chāḷukya kingdom Gupta art had been imported on a vast scale in the reign of Pulakeśin II, the contemporary and opponent of Harshavardhana. Even the slight admixture of Gandhāra elements fits into the picture of the time. Though Gandhāra elements in late Gupta art, as in the Lakshaṇā temple pediment or in the Buddha statuette from Fatehpur (Kangra) are rare, the last stages of the Gandhāra style are flooded with Gupta inspirations and adaptations (Hadda, Bamiyan, Fondukistan in Afghanistan, and Khotan, Kucha, Ming-Oï, Qumtura in Eastern Turkistan). Even more decisive Gupta influence is apparent in 7th century Nepal, indeed, to such a degree that it has left its mark on the whole later development of Nepalese art. The amazing aesthetic affinity between the art of the Brahmor kingdom and Nepalese art is due not to any interrelations, but to a common dependence on the Gupta style in the age of Harshavardhana. This is not surprising. In that period Gupta art spread far and wide, over Greater India, Kashmir, Nepal, Tibet, Afghanistan, Eastern Turkistan, China and Indonesia; and within a less extensive

10 R. D. Banerji, *Bas-reliefs of Badami,* Calcutta 1928, pls. Ic, IIb, VII, IXa-b, XVII.

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area late Gandhāra art did the same. This is the common phenomenon of all declining civilizations. The devastations of successive barbarian invasions—in this case Tunguses, Hephtalites, Gurjaras, Turks and Tibetans—as well as the crushing taxation needed for vast armies to keep the barbarians at bay, and the civil wars developing between the war lords caused a shrinking economy, unemployment and a refugee problem just at a time when the luxury professions had developed most lavishly. Artists were forced to emigrate and to adapt themselves to novel conditions. But the prestige of their culture, just when it was politically and economically declining, made it easy for them to find work even amongst the barbarians who were superseding the sinking great power. The Lakshaṇā temple at Brahmor is but one of many monuments of this exported late Gupta art.

But the temple of Śakti Devī, though still belonging to the same tradition, seems already to represent the transition to a local school. That the plan of this temple differs from that of the Lakshaṇā Devī, does not matter. Whether it once had a "pagoda" roof or not, we can no longer ascertain though it seems probable. But the *garbhagṛiha,* surrounded merely by a covered *pradakshiṇāpatha,* was also a common temple-type of the Gupta period, the most famous example being the great temple of Gop in Saurāshṭra [11]. And naturally, with several types of temples available, the architect would not repeat the same plan without serious reasons. The more subtle differences are the real interest. The number of individual art motifs in the Śakti temple is much less, though this may be accidental, as there is no pediment corresponding to that of the Lakshaṇā shrine. But also the artistic variety of the figures on the entrance frame cannot compare with the latter. On the other hand, the system of deities is more elaborate, the decorative motifs actually used are more varied in the details, the whole ornamentation is richer and more interesting, and its execution more fluid and elegant. Compared with the corresponding parts of the Śakti Devī, the decoration of the Lakshaṇā Devī looks somewhat plain and stiff. Thus, whereas the influx of basic inspirations begins to dry up, the mastery over the forms really absorbed has become greater. These observations confirm the tradition that the Śakti temple was the last work of the same master who had previously built the temple of Lakshaṇā Devī.

Whether he was Gugga, as the tradition wills it, is another question. There is no inscriptional evidence as to who had been the architect. But in Meruvarman's inscriptions Gugga is mentioned as the master-craftsman who cast the brass images of Lakshaṇā, Śakti Devī, Nandi and Gaṇeśa. Before going into this question, we

11 H. Cousens, *Somanatha and other Mediaeval Temples in Kathiawad,* Calcutta 1931, pl. XXVII ff. See also Nāchnā-Kuthara, A. Cunningham, *A.S.R.* XXI, p. 95 ff., pls. XXV-XXVI, *A.P.R.,* Northern Circle 1919-20.

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shall have to analyze the style of these images. Fundamentally, it is the same as that of the woodcarvings. And yet, there is a curious inequality both in technique and style. The three idols are masterpieces of late Gupta art; the pedestal of Gaṇeśa and the whole figure of Nandi, on the other hand, are grotesquely clumsy work. In the latter case the difficulty of casting such a big statue, especially the bulky body of the animal, may be considered as an extenuating circumstance. But then, why have even the head and feet been mismodelled so badly that one doubts if the artist had ever seen a cow? And the same applies to the Gaṇeśa pedestal and its absurd figures. The form of Gaṇeśa's pedestal was at that time much more common in the art of Central and Eastern Asia than in India, and also the monstrous, squatting semi-human figure in its centre fits better into the former. Possibly this may have been the work of an assistant of Inner-Asian extraction, probably a Tokharian, which would explain the mismodelling of Nandi; for cows are hardly known in Central Asia.

These same foreign features we find, later on, in the socle of the Narasiṁha statue. For the decoration of mountain peaks is a motif unknown in India, but common in the Buddhist art of Eastern Turkistan, especially in the old Tokharian kingdom of Kucha [12], whereas the lions remind us of Chinese terra-cottas. In the reign of Ājyavarman and Lalitāditya, when we can find Chinese influence also at Pandrethan and Parihāsapura, this appears not so extraordinary.

But all the other work of Meruvarman's bronzes is obviously from Gugga's hand. Its workmanship is excellent and expert. The figures of the two goddesses have the same slim elegance which distinguishes the wooden statuettes and reliefs of the entrances to their shrines; they wear the lavish jewelry of the late Gupta period; Lakshaṇā Devī's *jaṭāmukuṭa* is not a tangled mass of natural hair, but a fashionable Gupta wig (*alaka*); and Śakti Devī's lotus socle is one of the glorious symbols which later Buddhist art inherited from the Gupta period. And yet, as in the woodcarvings, here too other features point to the art of the Deccan in the 7th century. Lakshaṇā Devī represents the early Chāḷukyan concept of Mahishamardinī (Aihole, Badami, early Ellora caves). And the athletic muscles of Narasiṁha and Gaṇeśa are familiar from the sculpture of Pulakeśin II [13]. The head of the former finally links up, on the one hand, with Badami [14], and on the other, with Kashmir sculpture of the 9th century.

But even here non-Gupta features break through. Whether the crowns, with

12 A. Grünwedel, *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch Turkistan,* Berlin 1912 (Ming-Oï, figs 44, 110-113, 115, 125-164, 208, 210, 237, 238, 298-300, and Kirish, figs. 381. 437).

13 They were a mannerism also in early Gandhāra art (2nd-4th century) and again in the Avantivarman style of Kashmir sculpture in the 9th century.

14 R. D. Banerji, *op. cit.,* pl. XVIII*a.*

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their reminiscences of Gandhāra art, represent an outside element, or a fashion of Harshavardhana's reign, inspired by contact with the barbarians, we cannot at present decide. But in Gugga's modelling there is also a tendency to simplify surfaces and masses, and to add details by engraving slightly indicated lines and dots, a procedure very characteristic of Iranian sculpture. Was this Gugga's own aesthetic reaction? Like all late Gupta artists, he must have been guided very much by drawings and models taken from the famous prototypes. And probably his best work was modelled on masterpieces, since lost, of late Gupta sculpture. But Gugga was certainly not a native Indian, as his name shows. For Gugga or Gūgā is a Gurjara name [15], today surviving in several semi-mythic sagas [16] connected with the Pratihāra, Paramāra and Chauhān Rajputs, i.e. the "Fire Pit Races", and with a village godling still venerated in Rājasthān, the Panjab and the Himalaya by Jats, Gūjars, Mers, and other clans apparently immigrated from the West.

So much is clear that Gugga cannot have executed all the construction work, wood-carving and brass casting himself. The more so as as the original number of richly decorated temples at Brahmor seems to have been greater. For the Sūrajmukha Liṅgam, Śiva Śūlapāṇi and Gaṇeśa must have had temples similar to that of Lakshaṇā Devī. He can have been merely the most expert master and guiding supervisor of a whole group of artists. The temple entrances are indubitably his own work. But in the pediment of the Lakshaṇā temple two other hands can be traced, one an Indian, probably an old man, as his style is much more conservative than that of Gugga, and another with Central-Asian (late Gandhāra-Chinese) training; he is probably the same person who helped in casting the brass images. And in the pillar capitals of both temples we can detect a fourth hand, somewhat clumsy and lifeless, but very careful, possibly a local pupil of Gugga.

What afterwards became of this Brahmor studio, we cannot say, though the Narasiṁha image and Markulā may offer some clues. The image reveals the tradition of Meruvarman's reign still alive, but its style has the hard vigour and violence of the 8th century, though enriched by new inspirations from Kashmir and Central Asia [17]. The Markulā shrine is the last wooden temple known to us

15 The name is found also in the Siya-Dudhar fountain stone inscription, see Vogel, *Antiquities*, p. 242, pl. XXXVI.

16 A Cunningham, *A.S.R.* XIV, p. 81 ff.; W. A. Crooke, *Ind. Ant.* XXIV, p. 49 ff., Vogel, *Catalogue of the Bhuri Singh Museum,* Calcutta 1909, p. 6 (A. 32: Stone image from Jagati, Ranhun Kothi *pargana,* near Chatrarhi).

17 In this respect it is utterly different from the elegance of 10th century Pratihāra art which we find also in the Gaurī-Śaṁkara group of Yugākaravarman, the husband of queen Tribhuvanarekhā who had built the Narasiṁha temple.

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in fundamentally the same tradition. For although wooden hill temples were also constructed later in Chamba, as well as in the rest of the Panjab Himalaya, their art belongs either to local folk art or to the Rajput court tradition, or imitated the later Hindu stone architecture (e.g. Khajiar and Katarmal pillar fragments), which, in the high Pratihāra style, was introduced in Chamba by Sāhila. Nevertheless the Markulā temple poses such difficult problems that we must be very cautious in drawing conclusions.

We have already pointed out that its sculptures belong to two different sets, an earlier one consisting of the façade of the *garbhagṛiha* and of the ceiling and four main pillars of the *maṇḍapa*; and a later one, comprising two additional pillars, the *dvārapāla* statues on both sides of the façade, the window panels and the architraves supporting the ceiling. Add to this that, as in the case of the other temples, the whole exterior shell of the Markulā temple is comparatively modern. In other words, the temple, as a whole, is not so very old, but a reconstruction making use of the fragments left from an earlier temple on the same spot. The date of this reconstruction can be fixed with considerable certainty. As already mentioned, in 1569-70 Ṭhākur Hīmapāla dedicated a new silver idol of Kālī to the temple. This must have occurred not long after the conquest of western Lahul by raja Pratāp Siṅgh (1558-1582) of Chamba. Previously, Lahul had been for several centuries under the rule of Ladakh, and the temple was then dedicated to rDo-rje phag-mo (Vajravārāhī) [18], under whose name Tibetan pilgrims still venerate Kālī. It is, therefore, evident that the Kālī idol was set up when, after the return of Lahul under Hindu rule, the then Lamaistic sanctuary was reconverted into a Hindu shrine. An image of Kālī was apparently selected not only because of its superficial similarity to that of Vajravārāhī, but also because the backward local population hardly made any distinction between the Lamaistic and Hindu interpretations of the Great Goddess.

Now, the last set of sculptures is executed in the same Hindu revivalist style that flourished in Chamba under Pratāp Singh. Also the selection of subjects from the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa is characteristic of this time. Moreover, a local tradition asserts that the Markulā temple was the work of the master who in 1553 had erected the very interesting temple of Hiṛmā at Manali for Bahādur Singh of Kulu. As a matter of fact, there is a remarkable similarity of many figures and other details of these later wood carvings to the reliefs of the Hiṛmā temple. And as Pratāp Singh was the son-in-law and close friend and ally of Bahādur Singh, it seems highly probable that the master of the Manali temple

18 It formed part of the Mar-skul monastery, renewed not long before the annexation of Lahul by Pratāp Singh. See A. H. Francke in Vogel, *Antiquities,* p. 254, 257.

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had indeed been also the architect and sculptor of the present Markulā Devī temple. The need for such a thorough renovation of the sanctuary must have facilitated its reconversion into a Hindu temple very much, in contrast to Triloknāth which up to the present day is both Lamaistic and Hindu.

The matter, however, is not quite so simple. The two great window panels of Trivikrama and of the Churning of the Ocean, though betraying the hand of the Manali master,resemble much more the earlier ceiling panels. Whereas the figure of Pārvatī combing Śiva's hair is a typical Manali detail, all the other gods on the same panel, and also the gods in the upper part of the Trivikrama panel are careful, though not too successful imitations of the gods in the Śaiva and Buddhist panels of the ceiling. But the despondent Asuras and the Nāgarājas at the bottom of both panels, despite their clumsy execution, reveal a later Gupta prototype; and the figure of Trivikrama must go back to at least an early medieval Kashmiri prototype because of its three heads and its crown; and its general concept reminds us rather of Badami II and III [19] or of an early stela from Eastern Bengal [20]. In other words, the Manali master merely copied badly damaged older window-panels which had been executed in the style of the ceiling panels, but which, as we shall observe in the still existing original pieces also, in their turn had been partly copied from prototypes of the 7th-8th century.

The general character of these ceiling panels is that of 11th-12 th century Hindu art. The charming friezes of dancing *gaṇas* on the east, south and west panels especially would fit into any North Indian temple of that time. And yet, the equation is not altogether satisfactory. The Gandharva-Apsaras panels, notwithstanding their Śaiva character, are merely variations of *mithuna* panels in the Ajanta (XVII) [21] and Badami [22] caves; the ringlet wigs, bow-harps and staff-citharas of the Gandharvas belong to the Gupta tradition; the crowns they are holding, we have already seen in the 7th-8th century monuments at Brahmor, Chatrarhi, Masrur and Bilaspur; the crowns and massed hair of the Apsaras, like those of the other gods, are characteristic of the 7th-8th century. The dancing *gaṇas* at the bottom of the Śaiva panel resemble similar friezes at Ajanta XXIII-XXIV, Aihole and Badami [23]; and their hair style is definitively late Gupta. The principal figures of the same panel would stand isolated in Śaiva iconography of the high middle ages; but they are closely related to the Magadha-Gupta, Pal-

19 R. D. Banerji, *Bas-reliefs of Badami,* Calcutta 1928, pls. IX*a*, XVI*a-b*.
20 K. N. Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum,* Dacca 1929, pl. XXXVIII (p. 105).
21 J. Griffiths, *op. cit,* vol. I, pl. LXI.
22 R. D. Banerji, *op. cit.,* pl. XII.
23 Banerji, *op. cit.,* pl. VII.

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lava and early Chālukya tradition of the 6th-7th centuries. The sixteen-armed dancing Śiva has his counterparts at Badami (Cave I) [24] and in the Dacca Museum [25]. The dancing Devī recurs at Aihole and Badami (unpublished single sculptures); the two Bhairavas on both sides are a common feature in the early Pallava caves [26] and in all the Śaiva caves of Elephanta (late 7th century) and Ellora (late 7th—early 8th centuries). Taking all together, it is evident that these high medieval panels also are no more than free copies and elaborations of lost earlier prototypes of the 7th century.

However, in the façade of the shrine we are confronted with a pure and unadulterated monument of this same high medieval style. As this had been the product of a natural evolution from late Gupta and early medieval art, this façade repeats all the features of the shrine entrances of Brahmor and Chatrarhi. But in the meantime these features have undergone a remarkable elaboration and reinterpretation. The whole façade is flooded with a fantastic wealth of restless ornaments, of complicated architectural motifs and of slim and elegant, very mannered figures, arranged not over a succession of receding frames, but in an irregular, though well balanced rhythm of strong accents between broad surfaces, and major or minor depth-and-shadow effects: projecting pillars and capitals, niches and individual figure groups. Nevertheless even those accents do not become tangible; every architectural or decorative motif dissolves into minor ornaments, every figure into masses of jewelry, symbols or attendants. The columns dissolve into flowers, wickerwork, small panels, jewelry, the cornices and capitals into strings of pearls or friezes of *haṁsas* carrying a pearl string, the lintels and jambs into sets of complicated medallions, image niches and chapels, the arches into exuberant leaf scroll-work, and this again into *kīrtimukha* masks; the gables are broken up into complicated architectural settings enlivened with jewels, flowers and birds. And the medallions are filled with dancing Apsarases [27], the niches and chapels with gods and goddesses, and Gandharvas play their instruments on the lintel underneath the habitations of the higher deities. All the characteristics of a late style: over-elaboration, restless dynamism, open form, picturesque organization, playful lightness are represented.

But what style is this? On the one hand we can trace many links with Kashmir.

24 Banerji, *op. cit.,* pl. II*a*.

25 Bhattasali, *op. cit.,* pl. XLII, XLVII.

26 A. H. Longhurst, *op. cit.,* I, 1924, pl. XV*b*, XVII, XVIII*a*; II, 1928, pl. IV*b*, XXVI.

27 This is a common motif also in the contemporaneous Western Chālukyan art of the Deccan, see H. Cousens, *Chalukyan Architecture,* 1926, pl. LXVIII (Lakkundi), CXV*a* (Balagamve), CXXXV (Unkal).

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The pillars, capitals and cornices are related to those of Avantipur and Patan [28], the arches and gables to those of Avantipur, Pandrethan, Narastan, Patan (miniature temple) [29]. The river goddesses and other deities are descendants of those in the temples of Martand [30] and Avantipur (Fig. 12). And yet even the richest of all these Kashmir monuments are simple and classic when compared with the exuberance of the façade of the Markulā Devī shrine.



Fig. 12

The other link is with the art of Western Tibet in the age of the great religious and cultural missionary Atīśa (Phul-byung) [31] in the second quarter of the 11th century. The entrance of the rNam-par-snang-mdzad temple at Alchi (Ladakh) reveals many similarities with the Markulā shrine façade, door jambs with similar niches, an inner frame with similar figures projecting from the capitals and lintel, with a more emphasized central figure, an upper lintel with five chapels, the same involved gables, the same wickerwork knots, of course, all covered with Buddhist images [32]. The woodcarvings of the gSum-thsag temple [33] in the same place have

28 R. Ch. Kak, *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir,* London 1933, pls. L, LXVII*a*, LXXII.
29 Kak, *op. cit.,* pls. XLIV, LII, LVII.
30 H. Goetz, *Art & Letters,* XXVII, no. 1, p. 1 ff., 1953, pl. IV.
31 Sarat Chandra Das, *Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow,* Calcutta 1893; *Life of Atīśa, J.A.S.B.* LX, pt. 1, p. 46.
32 A. H. Francke, *op. cit.,* I, pl. XXXIX*a*.
33 *Ibidem,* pl. XXXVII*a*.

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the same ornamental friezes, the same cornices, the same capitals with projecting friezes, and the Buddhas there remind us of the central figure in the *Māra-dharshaṇa* of the Markulā *maṇḍapa*. Two richly carved Buddhist panels found at Tabo Monastery in Spiti [34] have exactly the same double-arched Kashmiri niches, with a trilobed inner arch crowned by a pinnacle, and an exterior gable with little birds in the lateral corners; and the over-elongated, ondulating figures are of the same type as the river goddesses of Mārul. The door of the rBrom-ston temple [35], though simpler, represents the same tradition. A painted terra-cotta of Buddha accompanied by Vajrapāṇi and Avalokiteśvara [36] in the bDe-mC'ag temple at Tsaparang (Gugé) has a triple arch very similar to that of three of the chapels in the upper Markulā Devī lintel with the same slim, ondulating figures, and a carved wooden door [37], in the Red Temple there, is again a simpler example of the same school [38].

We cannot conclude from these similarities that the high medieval Markulā temple is a work of Western Tibetan art. The very fact that it is a Hindu shrine, with Sūrya as the presiding deity, and the various forms of Śiva and the Devī, the *avatāras* of Vishṇu, and various minor gods in subsidiary position, exclude a Tibetan connection. The bulk of even the old Tibetan art in Ladakh, Spiti and Gugé is of a different, and in every respect late type [39]. Only those monuments which, as Tibetan tradition expressly states, were creations of Kashmir artists summoned to Tibet by king Lha-chen Byang-chub-sems-dpa' (ca. 1020-50) of Ladakh and the kings Lha-lde and 'Od-lde of Gugé [40] are executed in a style comparable to that of the façade of the Markulā shrine.

The latter must, therefore, be a work of Kashmir art of the period soon after the death of queen Diddā (1003), probably of the reign of Anantadeva (1028-63) who, after the preceding years of chaos, had made a vigorous attempt to restore Kashmir's suzerainty over the Panjab Hill states. Though Lahul is not mentioned, it must also have been amongst his conquests, as at least two adjoining states, Kashtwar and Chamba, had become Anantadeva's vassals [41]. It would otherwise

34 *Ibidem*, pl. XVIII; G. Tucci, *I Templi del Tibet Occidentale e loro Simbolismo Artistico*, 1: *Spiti e Kunavar* (*Indo-Tibetica* III), Rome 1935, pls. XLVI-XLVII.

35 Tucci, *op. cit.*, pl. LII.

36 G. Tucci, *I Templi del Tibet Occidentale* etc. 2: *Tsaparang*, Rome 1936, pl. XXX.

37 Tucci, *ibid.*, pls. CXII-CXVI.

38 Other temples of the same type are at Tholing (B.R. Chatterji, *J.U.P. Hist. Soc.* XIII, pt. 2, p. 30 ff.), and Lha-lun in Spiti (H. Lee Shuttleworth, *Lha-lun Temple, Spyi-ti*, Calcutta 1929), but cannot be quoted here in detail because of insufficient published documentation.

39 The Triloknāth image, however, belongs to this later Tibetan style.

40 Francke, *op. cit.*, II, p. 95, 169 f.

41 Vogel, *Antiquities*, p. 103.

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be difficult to understand how a pure Kashmiri temple of first-rate quality could have been erected or reconstructed there [42].

But there are reasons to conclude that it was not king Ananta but his queen Sūryamatī who built the Markulā Devī temple. Sūryamatī [43] was a princess of Trigarta, a very pious Śaiva devotee, and the foundress of many temples. Whereas for Kashmiris Lahul has little significance, it is a holy land of *tīrthas* to the Śaivas of the Panjab Himalaya. Sūryamatī, therefore, would have had an interest in restoring a sanctuary of hoary antiquity there. Its dedication to Sūrya might have something to do with the queen's name Sūryamatī, while the pronounced Śaiva emphasis in the ceiling relief [44] may be due to her intense devotion to Śiva. Moreover, as the conflagration of the Vijayeśvara temple [45] in the tragic civil war with her son Kalaśa proves, wooden temples must have been common then. And the medieval Markulā Devī temple probably was no more than a small and modest replica of what the destroyed Vijayeśvara temple had proclaimed in all its glory.

Some decades later king Lha-chen Utpala (ca. 1080-1110) [46]) invaded and conquered Kulu, and apparently also Lahul, as up to the 17th century we find the latter in Ladakhi hands. May we assume that after this conquest the Markulā Devī temple was converted into a shrine of Mārīchī-Vajravārāhi, the Lamaistic light-goddess? And that on this occasion part of the ceiling, probably broken by an avalanche [47], was replaced, i.e. the centre-piece with the *vajra*-petal frieze and the "Assault of Māra"? For the differences in style between this Buddhist panel and the other, Hindu, ceiling panels are almost imperceptible, so that they can be only separated by a few decades at the utmost.

42 It could be argued that Lahul then might have been under Chamba which under Somavarman (ca. 1060-80), the successor of Sālavāhana whom Ananta had overthrown and killed, had recovered fairly well. But even if Lahul had been under the suzerainty of Sālavāhana, it must have been lost after his defeat. And as Somavarman, too, continued to be a vassal of Kalaśa of Kashmīr (1063-89), he can hardly have had any opportunity to recover Lahul. Moreover, in Chamba not the Kashmiri style, but a degenerated variety of the quite different Trigarta style was used in architecture (e.g. in the Vajreśvarī and Hari Rāi temples). Would it appear probable that Somavarman had erected in distant and poor Lahul a shrine much finer than any in his own capital? For Sālavāhana and Somavarman see also Hutchison-Vogel, *History,* I, p. 290; and Vogel, *Antiquities,* p. 182.

43 *Rājataraṅgiṇī,* VII, 180 ff. transl. A. Stein, London 1900, vol. I, p. 282. Instead of Sūryamatī herself, also her pious minister Keśava, a brahmin from Trigarta, might possibly be considered as the rebuilder of the Markulā temple. See *Rājataraṅgiṇī* VII, 204 f., Stein, I, 285.

44 E.g. the small *liṅgas* in the square Gandharva ceiling-panels on the south side look very much like a later adaptation, as such *liṅga* stands were common in the high middle ages, but not in the Gupta period. Possibly the lost originals simply had flying Gandharvas, as in the other square panels.

45 *Rājataraṅgiṇī* VII, 408 ff., Stein, vol. I, p. 301.

46 Francke, *op. cit.,* II, p. 96.

47 This is the only possible explanation. As the temple had been repaired not long ago, no part could be worn out; there are no vestiges of conscious destruction, but the north and central panels were evidently those most exposed to snow pressure in case of an avalanche.

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But then, why can we not trace parallels to the early Markulā Devī temple in Kashmir proper? A survey of Kashmir's history and monuments will give a sufficient answer. The Kashmir valley is a rather small country, and notwithstanding its great fertility, can, therefore, provide only limited resources; the revenues of the Kashmir kingdom, thus, depended on the extent of control over the neighbouring districts and states, in the Himalaya as well as in the plains, and this again depended on the internal stability of the kingdom. In the late 7th century the princes of the Kārkoṭa dynasty built up an empire expanding first over the Himalaya, then the Panjab and Afghanistan, finally over most of northern, western and central India which, however, disintegrated again after the death of Lalitāditya in 756. The early rulers of the Utpala dynasty restored the control of Kashmir over the Panjab and Afghanistan during the second half of the 9th and the first quarter of the 10th century, after which the empire was again lost, mainly to the Hindu Sāhīs. In the 11th century the first rulers of the Lohara dynasty revived at least some control over the Himalayan states, before Kashmir definitively sank down to the status of a third-rate power.

These political vicissitudes are reflected most faithfully in the monuments still existing, that is, the temples in stone. The majority of them — and they are the finest ruins of all — are creations of the Kārkoṭa dynasty, especially of the great conqueror Lalitāditya, e.g. at Parihāsapura, Pandrethan *(stūpas)*, Malot, Wangath, Narastan, Buniyar, etc. The second series, less in number and size, though more lavishly decorated, belongs to the Utpala dynasty, e.g. Avantipur, Patan, Pandrethan (stone temple), Bumzu. Of the Lohara dynasty finally very few and modest monuments survive. And yet, from the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* it is evident, that all the time building activities never ceased, that in fact they had been very intensive. But most of these buildings were executed in cheaper and more perishable materials. Obviously the resources of kings of whom several had recourse to pillaging the temples of their predecessors, did not permit of such a solid, but also expensive, construction as stone blocks of often gigantic size. But this cannot have been the only cause. Most of the reigns were short and insecure, and most of the rulers were concerned more with the maintenance and enjoyment of their precarious power, than with their posthumous fame. This desire for enjoyment in the first place generated a refined luxury subject to repeated changes of fashion; and, therefore, developed a very rich and refined style of art. But the execution had to be rapid, and this meant the use of either stone quarried from older monuments, or of wood. The chronicle of Kashmir, therefore, is a long record of towns, temples and palaces laid in ashes. Add to this the systematic intentional destruction and not less the indifferent despoiling for building purposes, of Hin-

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du ruins in Muslim times, and it is obvious that only the mightiest monuments, or such forgotten in lonely and hardly accessible places have escaped destruction. Thus, it is the luxurious later Hindu art of Kashmir that has almost entirely disappeared, and we have to reconstruct it from a handful of remnants, occasional stone images and bronzes in Kashmir itself and the wooden architecture, wood-carvings, stucco reliefs and murals executed by Kashmiri Buddhist missionaries in Tibet and preserved there in some ancient monasteries and temples.

How this wooden architecture had looked, it is difficult to say in the absence of any complete monuments. The Markulā temple cannot be accepted as a specimen, as its present shape is a product of the 16th century, whereas its 11th century lay-out merely copied the original temple of the 7th-8th century, as the many more or less free imitations of older reliefs prove. However, we have some clues with regard to the Buddhist sanctuaries. The peculiar type of the indigenous Muslim mausoleum and mosque of Kashmir [48] has already puzzled many observers. It is a gigantic blockhouse square in groundplan, enclosing one vast hall without any pillars, or two halls, one on top of the other, under a slightly sloping roof from the centre of which a curious pyramidal spire rises. The one-storeyed hall exactly corresponds to the cult hall of a Tibetan temple, the two-storeyed hall, with galleries instead of a complete floor, to that of a Tibetan temple enshrining a gigantic image [49], the roof and spire to the top section of a Chorten. Even certain details, such as the wooden bells at the four corners, are a reminiscence of Lamaistic practices. In other words, the indigenous Muslim architecture of Kashmir seems to be nothing else than an adaptation of the preceding Buddhist architecture to the needs of a new religion [50]. How far also Hindu wooden temples followed the same plan, or had been of ordinary hill type, we do not know. The delicate playful architectural forms represented on the façade of the Markulā temple or on the Tabo panels were hardly fit to stand even a single Kashmir winter. And it looks as if things had been rather the other way round, i.e. that these delicate architectural dreams were then used mainly for the interior decoration of temples either of the above blockhouse type or of the hill type, and that they could assume such fragile delicacy and such intricate patterns just be-

48 R. Ch. Kak, *op. cit.* pl. VI: Shāh Hāmadān, pls. IX-X; Jāmi^c Masjid, pl. XLVI; Pāmpur Mosque. J. H. Nicholls, *A.S.R.* 1906-07, p. 161 ff. Perhaps the most characteristic building is the mausoleum of Madīn Sāḥib at Srinagar, built in stone, with medieval Kashmiri Hindu pillars at the corners, but otherwise of exactly the same type.

49 Also the *chaityagriha* of Lalitāditya at Parihāsapura must have been like this, see D. R. Sahni, *A.S.R.* 1915-16, p. 52; H. Goetz, *Jl. Bombay Univ.* XXI, pt. 2, p. 63 ff.

50 Such adaptations have been quite common in Muslim art, e.g. the Mosque of the Rock at Jerusalem, and the Turkish mosques, slight variations of the type of Byzantine churches, the Persian *aiwān* mosques and madrasas, and in India the Muslim architecture of Gujarat and Bengal.

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cause they had lost all genuine structural function. Within these limits we can accept the façade of the Markulā Devī shrine as a characteristic example of the interior of a wooden Hindu temple under the Lohara dynasty.

For the development of sculptural art we have at least two clues: king Śaṁkaravarman's brass frame for an image of the Buddha *avatāra* [51] found at Devasar, and the group of the Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi accompanied by Tārā and Bhṛikuṭī(?), consecrated in the reign of queen Diddā (980-1003) [52], both in the Srinagar Museum. They clearly reveal the slow transition to the style of what we generally call Tibetan art. The Padmapāṇi group shows a remarkable similarity of treatment to the façade of the Markulā shrine.

With the adaptation of Kashmiri wooden architecture to Muslim needs and with the export of the other refined arts of Kashmir to Tibet the historical circle which opened with the Hūṇa-Gurjara invasion of the 5th-6th century was closed. When the Tunguse and Ephthalites overran north-western India, a great age of human civilization disappeared in blood and fire. The refined late Kushān civilization and art of Central Asia was almost wiped out, though thanks to its links with eastern Turkistan it could enjoy a last "Indian summer" in the small Bamiyan kingdom of the 6th-7th century. The Gupta Empire likewise collapsed. But Gupta civilization, though mortally wounded, resisted for several centuries, defeating the barbarian invasions and absorbing the nomadic hordes into its own cadres. In this struggle it lost more and more of its original character and changed into the society and civilization of medieval India. But at the same time it recovered the vast territories lost to the barbarians by conquest, conversion, colonization and cultural infiltration. Successively Yaśodharman, the Maukharis and Pushyabhūtis threw back wave after wave of predatory hordes, and since the late 6th century the frontiers of the kingdom of Kanauj were held at the Ravi, while the southern front was held in Saurāshṭra and Gujarat by the Maitrakas and the Chāḷukyas of Badami. The next important steps forward were the hinduization of the Gurjara kingdoms of Broach, Bhinmal, Mandor and Brahmapura and the emergence of a strong Hindu state in Kashmir under the Kārkoṭa princes. With the conquest of northern India first by Lalitāditya of Kashmir and then by the Gurjara-Pratihāras, two Hindu empires were built up which successively united the highly cultured countries of central and eastern India with the semi-barbarian and barbarian countries of the West, up to the frontiers of the ᶜAbbasid and T'ang-Chinese empires. Thus the best achievements of late Gupta and medieval Hindu

51 H. Goetz, *J.A.S.* XIX Letters, no. 1, p. 45 ff.

52 R. C. Kak, *Handbook Srinagar Museum*, 1923, p. 70. The fine Maitreya group, p. 72, cannot be from Ladakh, as Kak assumes, nor from Kashmir, but is a very characteristic Pāla work.

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civilization were again introduced into most of the territory once controlled by the Kushāns. And even when the western countries relapsed into their former isolation, these cultural links were maintained, until one after the other the medieval Hindu states were conquered by the Muslims.

In this expansion of Hindu civilization to the West the Brahmapura kingdom formed an important link. A "Gurjara" state in the 6th century, it was more and more hinduized, and by the 8th century had almost completely lost its barbarian character, at last to develop into a pure Rajput vassal state of the Pratihāras in the 10th century. Its art, such as we can study it in the temples and brass idols of Brahmor and Chatrarhi and some echoes in the later reliefs of Markula, was an offshoot of the late Gupta style in the age of the great Harshavardhana of Thanesar, mixed with certain influences from the Deccan. Then it was merged into the mixed Gupta-Kashmiri art such as it developed in part of Lalitāditya's empire, in the provinces under the regency of Yaśovarman of Kanauj; next superseded by Kashmir influences which are still visible in the gable of the Lakshaṇā temple, and at last, in Sāhilavarman's reign, by the art of the Pratihāra empire. In the meantime the style evolved in Kashmir under Lalitāditya, increasingly refined first under Avantivarman and Śaṁkaravarman, then under Diddā, Anantadeva and Kalaśa, penetrated the Panjab and the Himalaya west of the Ravi in the 9th and 10th centuries, and Lahul and Tibet in the 11th.

For us, however, who have to pick up and to piece together the torn threads of history from the meagre and scattered fragments still left, the art history of the Panjab Himalaya assumes a much greater importance. For where the great masterpieces of the past have been lost, their echoes in the art of the provinces have to serve as substitutes. As the ruins of Pompeii, preserved, undisturbed, for posterity by the eruption of Vesuvius, permit us a rare glimpse into the civilization of the Roman Empire at its zenith, or as the Ajanta frescoes, long forgotten in some inaccessible cave monasteries of Central India, give us some idea of the glory of classic Gupta and Chāḷukya art, in the same way the temples and images of Brahmor and Chatrarhi, sheltered by the snowy peaks and gorges of the Himalaya, are representatives of that later Gupta art which was the source of most of the earlier art of Nepal and Greater India, and of Buddhist art in Eastern Turkistan, China and Japan. And Markula-Udaipur in lonely Lahul proves for us the last remnant of that lost later Kashmiri art which was one of the main sources of the Tibetan tradition. For this reason, these temples and sculptures are of more than local interest; they are the keys to the great periods in the art history of Asia and of the world.

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APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL NOTES BY THE EDITOR

At my suggestion the author has consented to omit diacritical marks in modern geographical names. The correct transliteration of some of them is as follows: Baijnāth, Basōhḷī, Bhadravāh, Bilāspur, Bi(y)ās (Skt. Vipāśā), Buḍhaḷ, Chhatrāṛhī, Gaṛhvāl, Jālandhar, Kāngṛā, Kaśmīr, Kuḷū (Skt. Kulūta), Maṇḍi, Nirmaṇḍ, Nūrpur, Pāngī, Panjāb, Paṭhān-kōṭ, Rāvī (Skt. Irāvatī), Satluj (Skt. Śatadru), Suk(h)ēt, Trēhtā (Skt. Trighaṭṭaka). On the map of Chamba State, reproduced from my *Antiquities,* Plate V, the palatals have been rendered by *c* and *ch.*

P. 64. The Vishṇu image, reproduced by B. Bhattacharya, *Indian Images* (1921), frontispiece, as originating from Sultanpur, the capital of Kulu, is also published by A. K. Coomaraswamy in his *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* (1927), Pl. LXIX, fig. 222. This author (p. 244) notes it as follows: — "Viṣṇu from Sulṭānpur, now in the Lucknow Museum. Buff sandstone, 3'5". Tenth or eleventh century". On p. 110 he says: — "As may have been gathered from the foregoing description, the culture of the Chandels in Central India was predominantly Brāhmanical, and most of the temples and sculptures are of a corresponding character (cf. fig. 222)". The image has no connection whatever with Kulu, but was found in the village of Seor, in the Kurebhar *tahsil* of the Sultanpur district, Uttar Pradesh. Cf. *J. Hyderabad Archaeological Society,* 1919-20, p. 47.

P. 75. Sir Alexander Cunningham in his note on the temple of Lakshaṇā Devī (*A.S.R.,* vol. XIV, p. 111) observes: "Over the middle of the door are fixed a pair of large ibex horns; smaller ones are placed at intervals with numbers of small *trisuls* and rails of iron". The ibex horns and also horns of rams and goats are plainly visible on Plate II. We may add to account for their presence that Devī is regarded as the mistress of the wild animals. The huntsman (*shikārī*) has to propitiate her by the sacrifice of a goat or a ram, and also for other purposes the villagers endeavour to win her favour in the same manner. The flesh of the victim is consumed by the sacrificer(s) and the *chelā,* and the horns of the animal are attached to the shrine of the goddess. The little iron tridents noticed by Cunningham are votive offerings which are believed to be agreeable to the goddess

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whose favourite weapon they reproduce. A large iron trident stands in front of her temple and a smaller specimen adorns the ridge of the sloping roof (Plate I b). The man sitting at the entrance is the *chelā* of Lakshaṇā Devī.

P. 95. As with the camera at our disposal it was impossible to obtain a photograph of the whole central portion of the ceiling, a partial view of it has been reproduced twice in Plate XIII in order to impart a total impression of this marvellous work of art.

P. 97. Mr. Sivaramamurti, M.A., Superintendent of the Archaeological Section, Indian Museum, has sent me the following note on the deities represented in the western panel "The whole group appears to be a glorification of Maheśa in his *naṭana* aspect and since Devī is also shown dancing beside him she may be taken to be Manonmanī. In the *Lalitāsahasranāma* Devī is described in the line *Maheśayuktanaṭanatatparā* as dancing with Maheśa. We can take the other forms of Śiva, excluding the Devī, which number five in all as Īśāna, Tatpurusha, Aghora, Vāmadeva and Sadyojāta, all five making up the Maheśa complex. Tatpurusha carries a *mātulunga* fruit in his left hand and an *akshamālā* in his right hand. Aghora carries a *khaṭvāṅga* and a *kapāla*. Vāmadeva carries a sword (*khaḍga*) and shield (*kheṭaka*). Īśāna carries an *akshamālā*, a *śūla* and a *kapāla*. The *Śaivakāraṇāgama* and *Rūpamaṇḍana* differ as regards the weapons attributed to these five forms of Śiva, known as the Pañchabrahmas.

P. 99 f. Brindavan C. Bhattacharya, *Indian Images,* 1921, pp. 31 f. supplies valuable information on the iconography of "the Nine Planets" derived from Hemādri, *Vishṇudharmottara* and *Matsyapurāṇa*. This enables us to identify most of the figures in the eight chapels. The deity in the centre of the upper row must be Budha (Mercury) who is stated to be similar to Vishṇu. The two on his left side may be safely identified with the demons Rāhu and Ketu. The first figure of the second row is Maṅgala-Bhauma (Mars), who according to the *Matsyapurāṇa* is similar to Agni, his *vāhana* being a ram and his weapons a lance and a trident. As it is very improbable that Sūrya and Chandra, the two principal members of the group, have been omitted and the separate figure over the doorway, whose hands are broken, appears to be the solar deity, we may perhaps assume that the person immediately above him represents Chandra, though not in his orthodox appearance. The identity of the three remaining *grahas* is also uncertain, but Bṛihaspati (Jupiter), who is stated to resemble Brahmā, may perhaps be recognized in the first figure of the upper row on account of his attributes. In his neighbour who has the same attributes — a gourd (*kamaṇḍalu*), a rosary (*akshamālā*) and a staff it is tempting to see Śukra (Venus) who is the *purohita* of the Asuras. If this is correct, it follows that the deity to the right of the sup-

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posed Chandra must be Śanaiśchara. The *śloka* regarding Rāhu quoted by Bhattacharya from Hemādri — *Kambalaṁ pustakaṁ kāryaṁ bhujanaikena saṁyutam* — is evidently corrupt. I propose to read — *kevalaṁ mastakam kāryaṁ bhujenaikena saṁyutam.*

The Grahas are also found in a frieze under the gable of the temple of Lakshaṇā (p. 77) and over the entrance to the shrine of Śakti Devī (p. 88). They occur also on the façade of the temple of Hiḍimbā at Dhungri near Manali in Kulu and on a small temple in the village of Prini between Manali and Jagatsukh.

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PLATES I–XVI

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a



b

a. VIEW OF THE ANCIENT CAPITAL, FROM SOUTH-WEST
b. TEMPLE OF LAKSHAṆĀ DEVĪ, FROM NORTH

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BRAHMOR



TEMPLE OF LAKSHAṆĀ DEVĪ, FAÇADE

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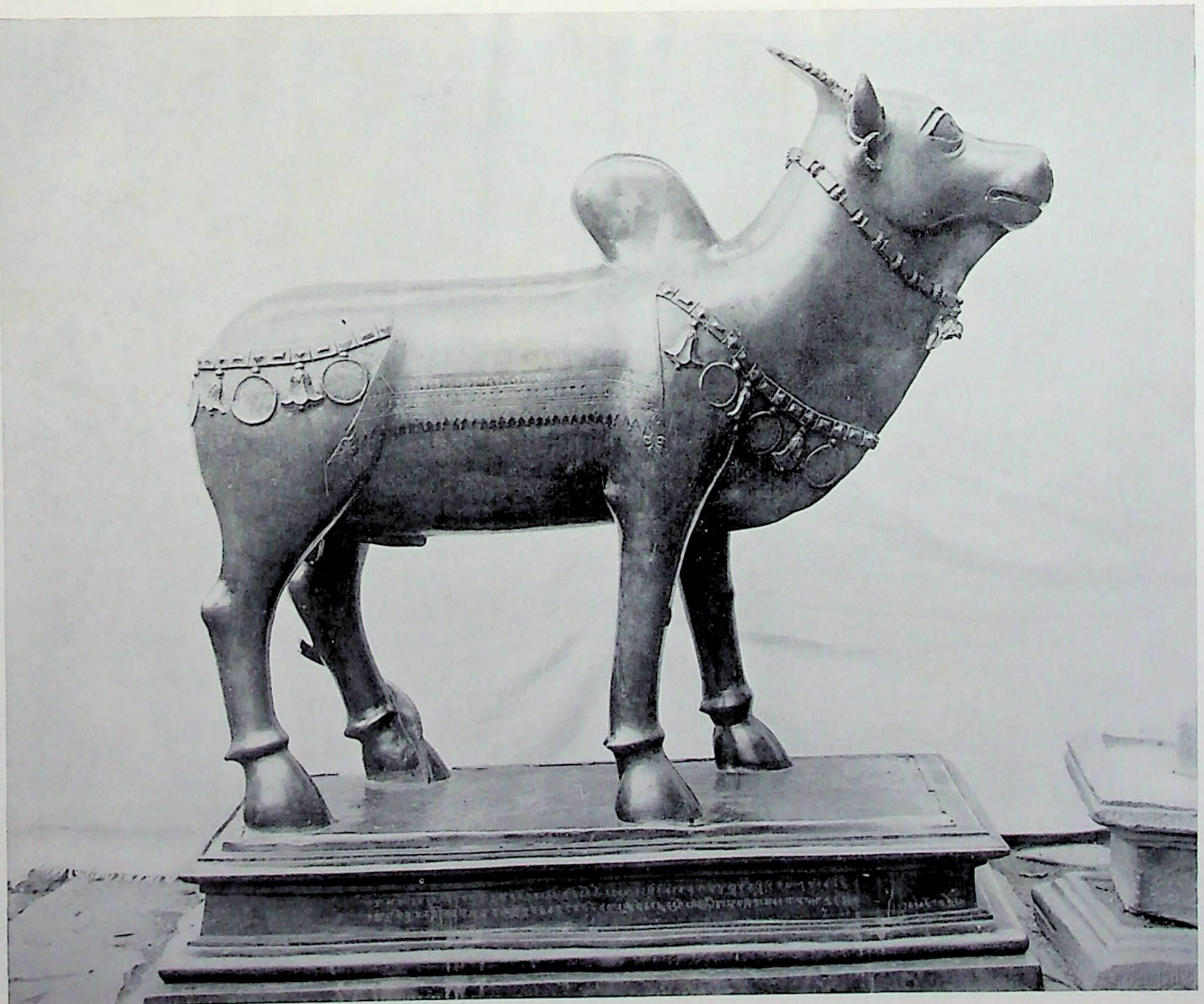


IMAGE OF THE BULL NANDI, HEIGHT 6′1″

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BRAHMOR



IMAGE OF NARASIṀHA, HEIGHT 3′

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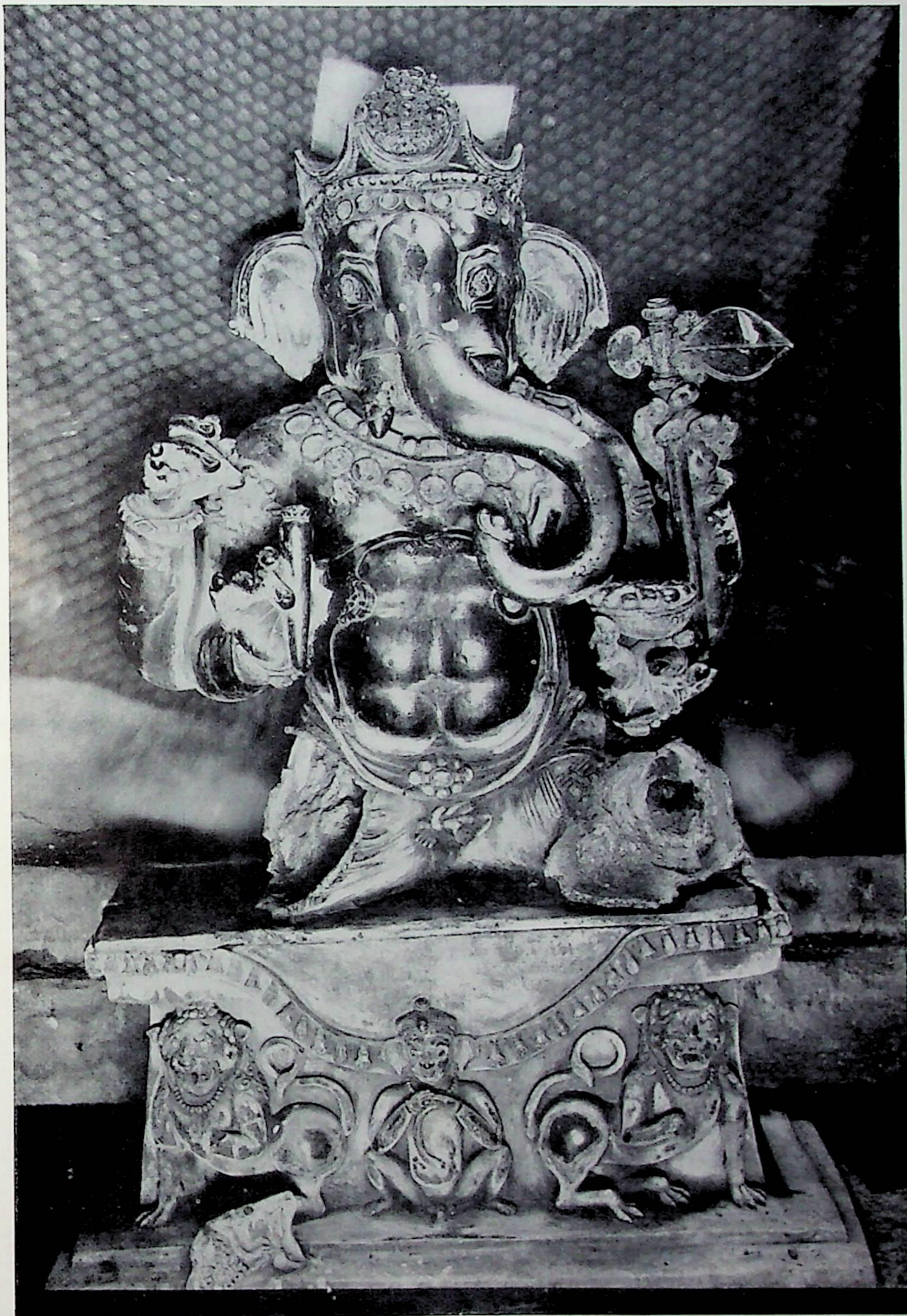


IMAGE OF GAṆEŚA, HEIGHT 3′

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BRAHMOR

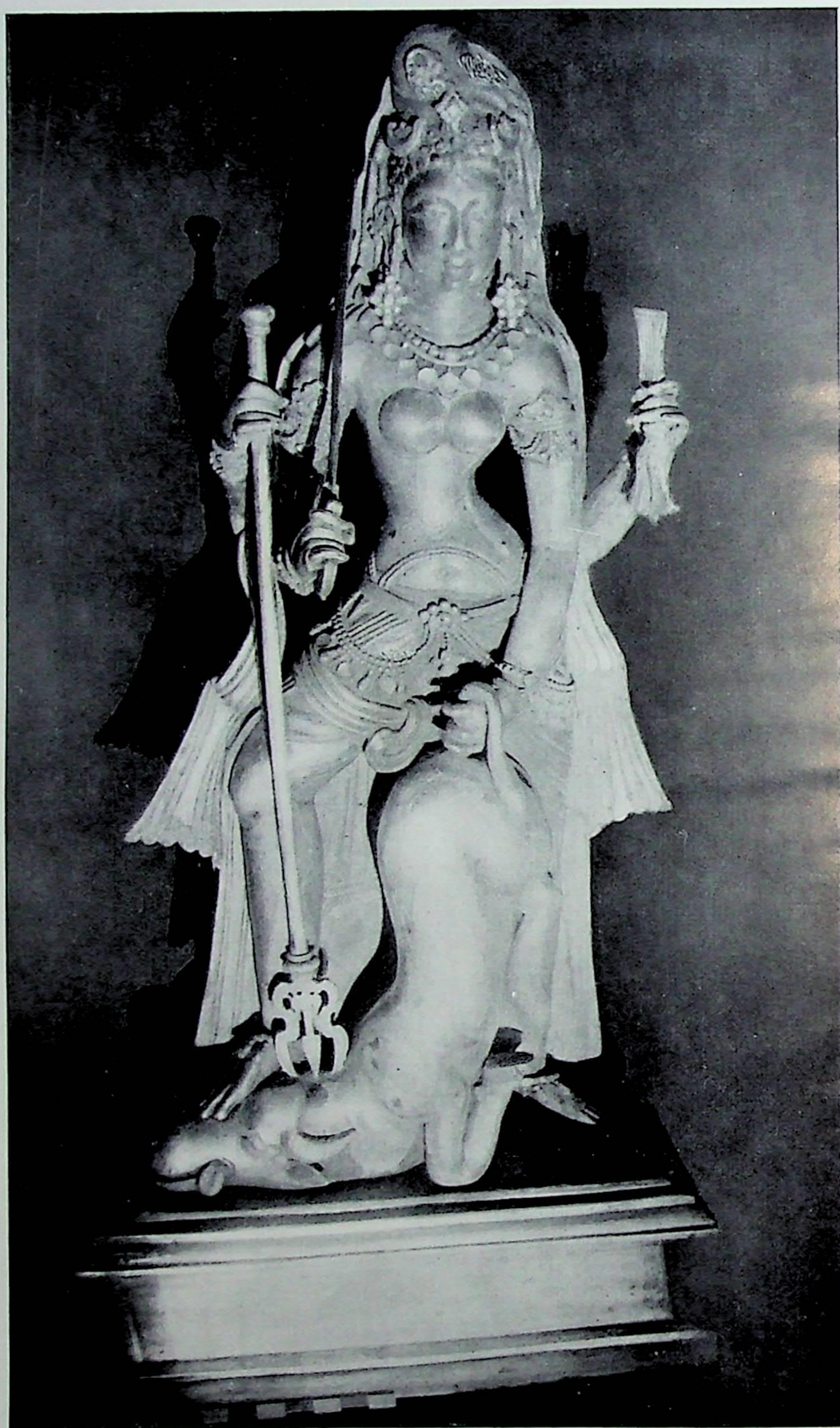


IMAGE OF LAKSHAṆĀ DEVĪ, HEIGHT 4′1″

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CHATRĀṚHĪ

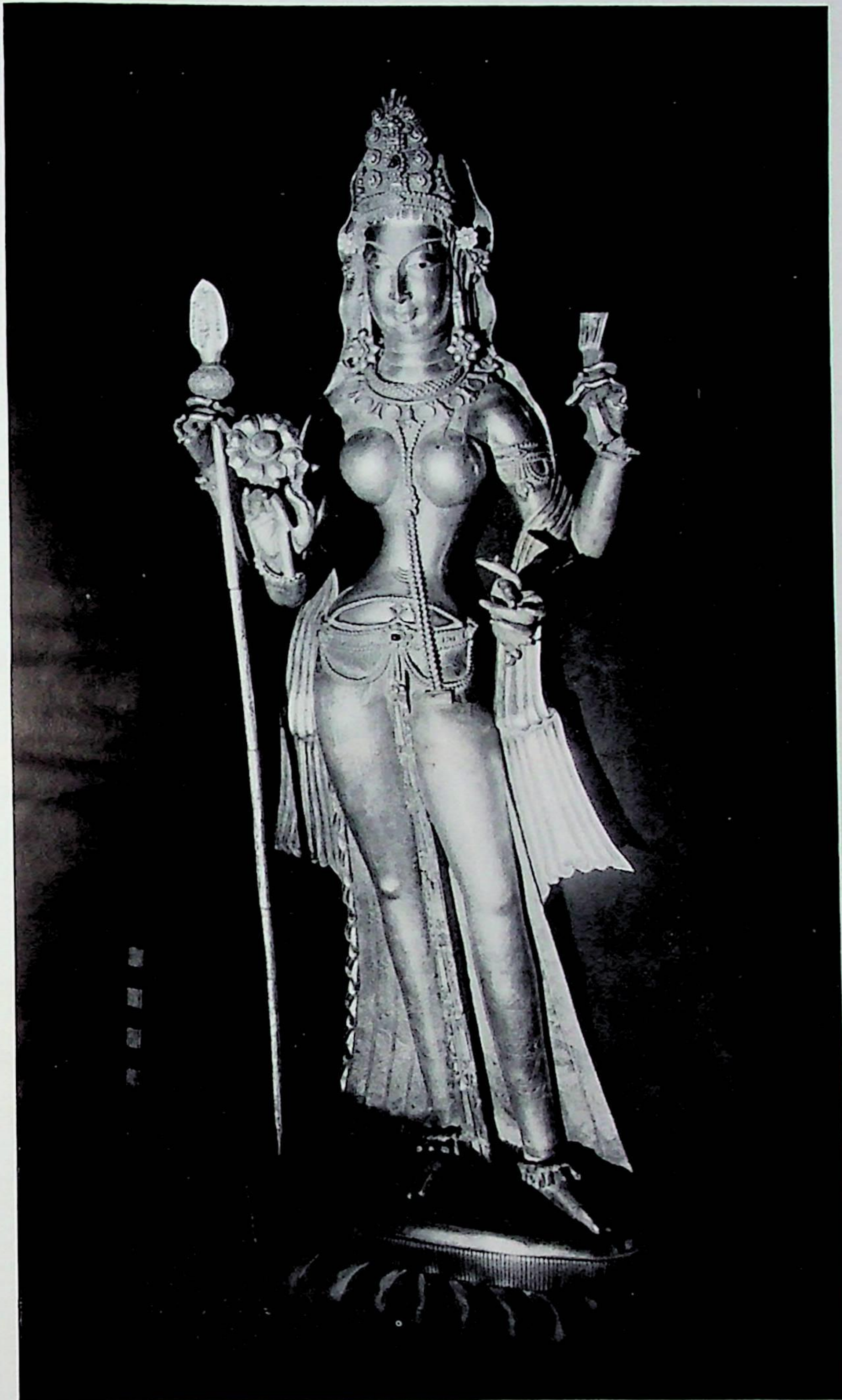
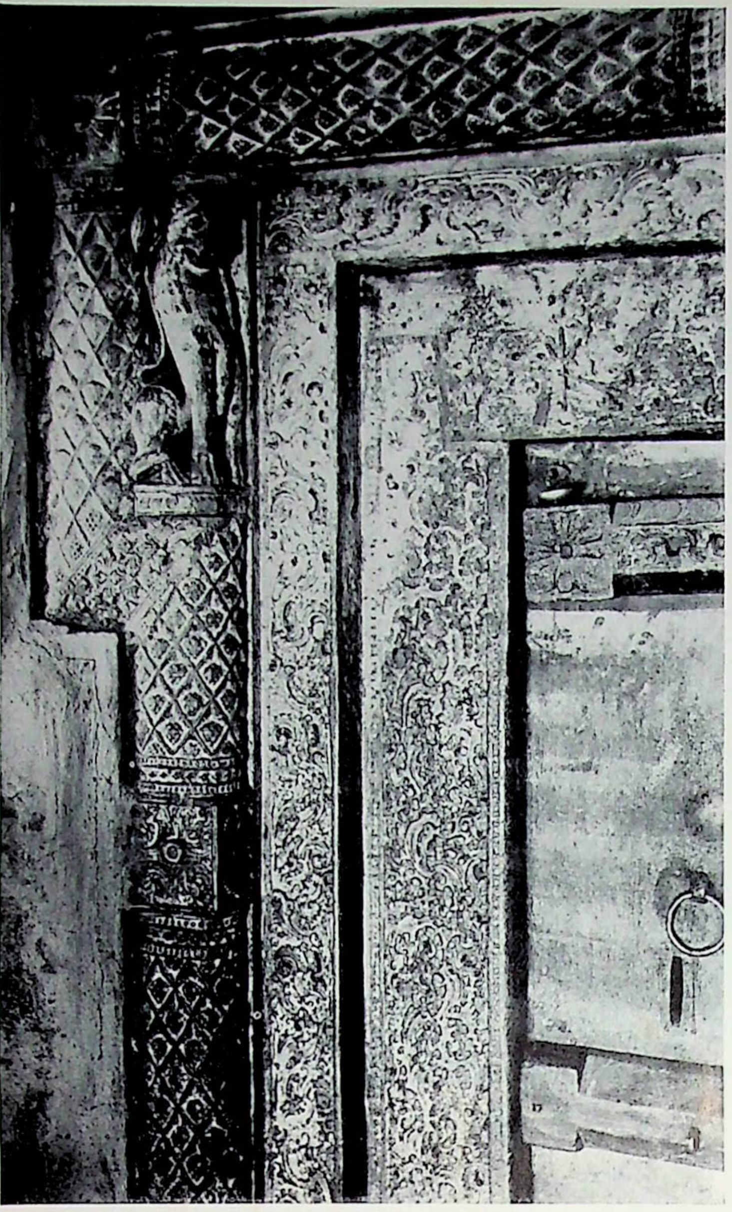
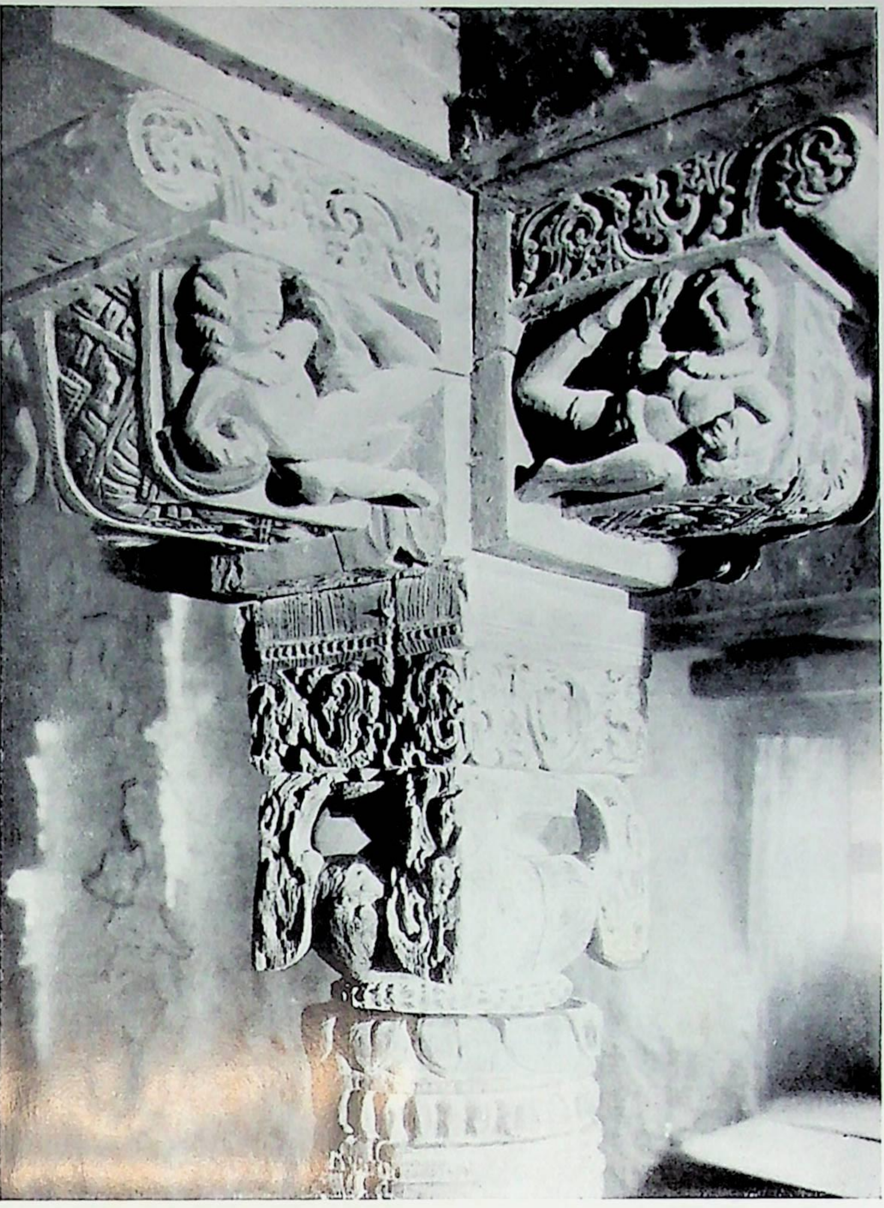


IMAGE OF ŚAKTI DEVĪ, HEIGHT 4′6″

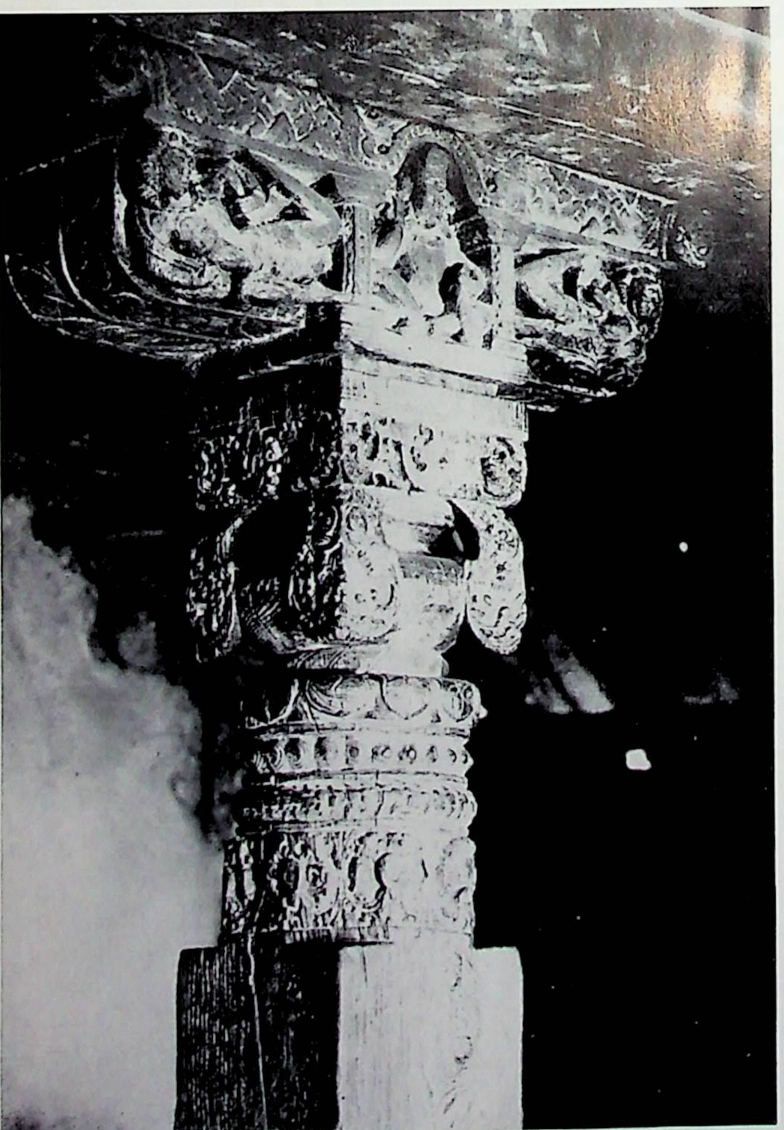
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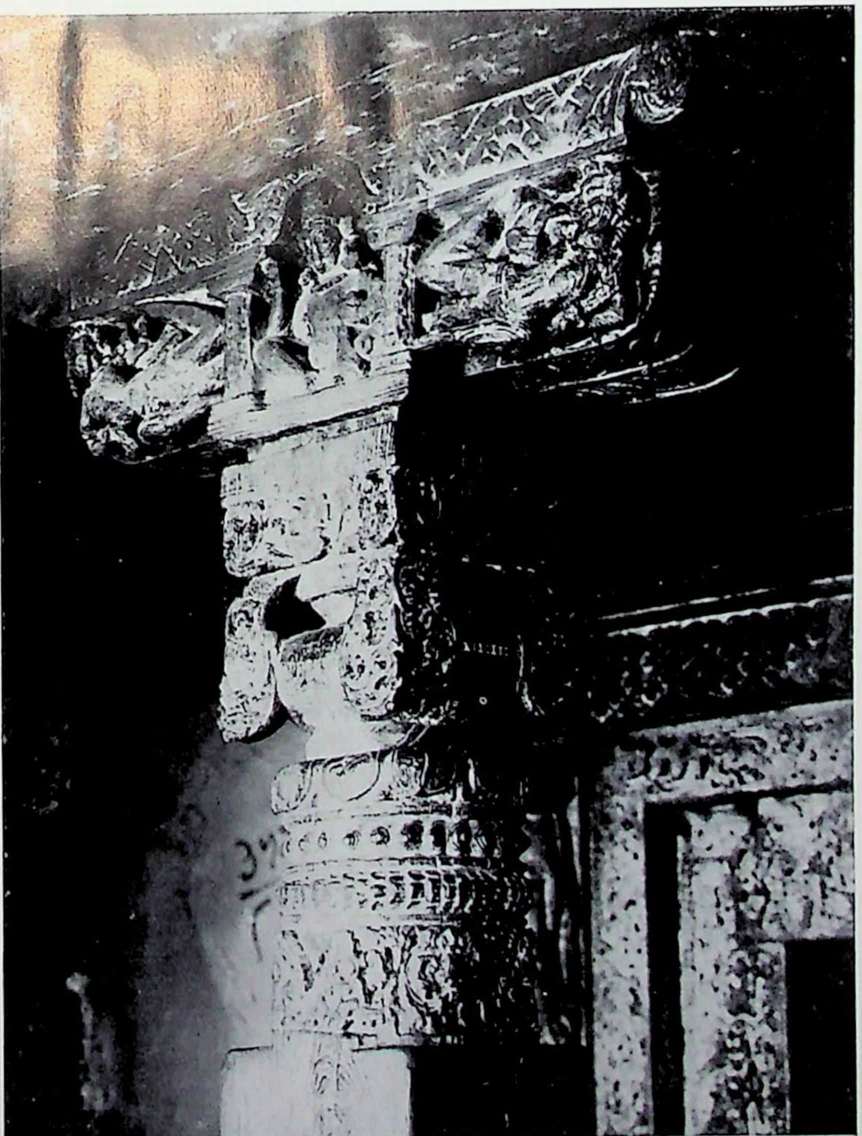




ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS OF ŚAKTI DEVĪ TEMPLE

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WOODEN PILLARS OF LAKSHAṆĀ DEVĪ TEMPLE

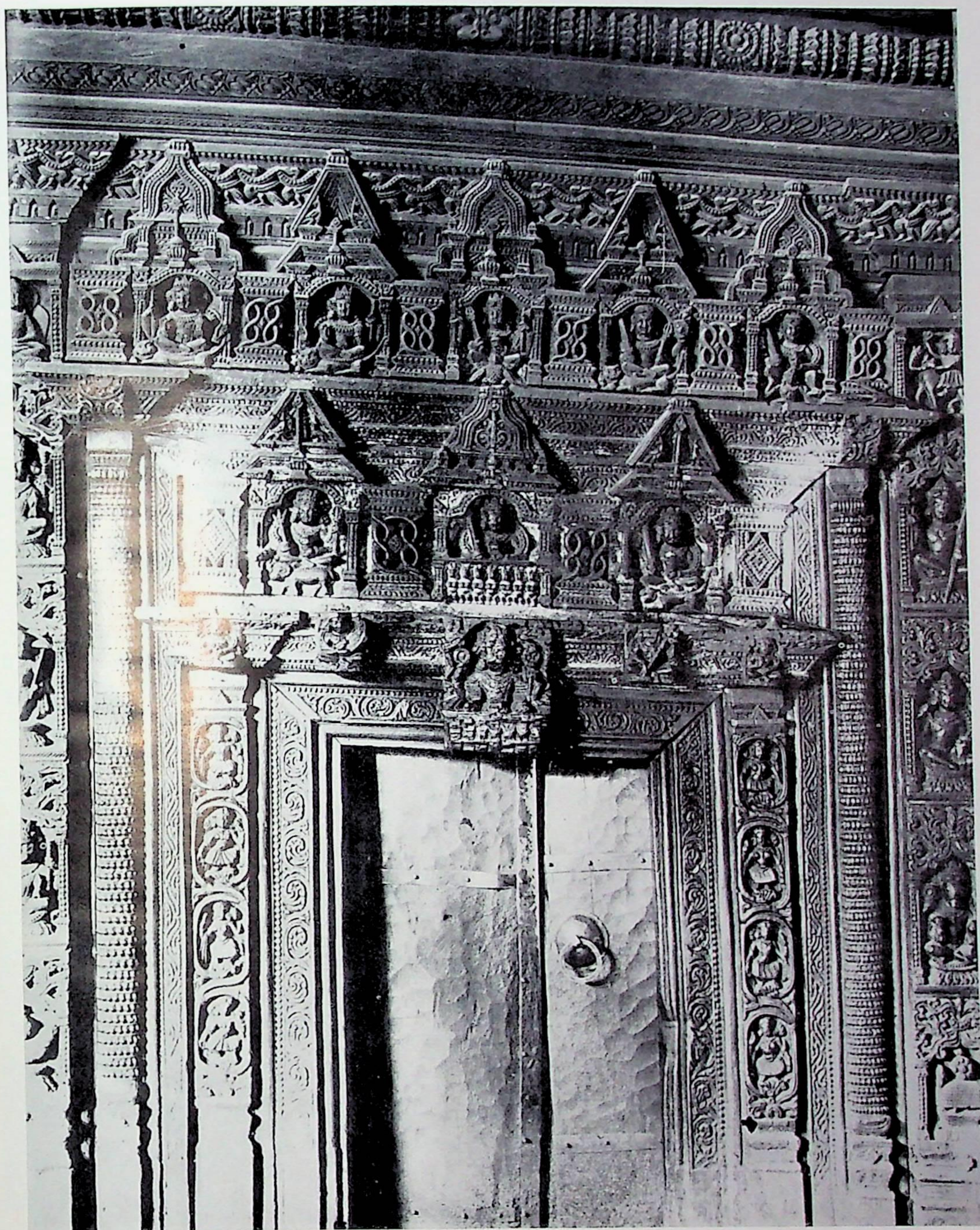
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UDAIPUR



TEMPLE OF MARKULĀ DEVĪ

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FAÇADE OF INNER SHRINE OF MARKULĀ DEVĪ

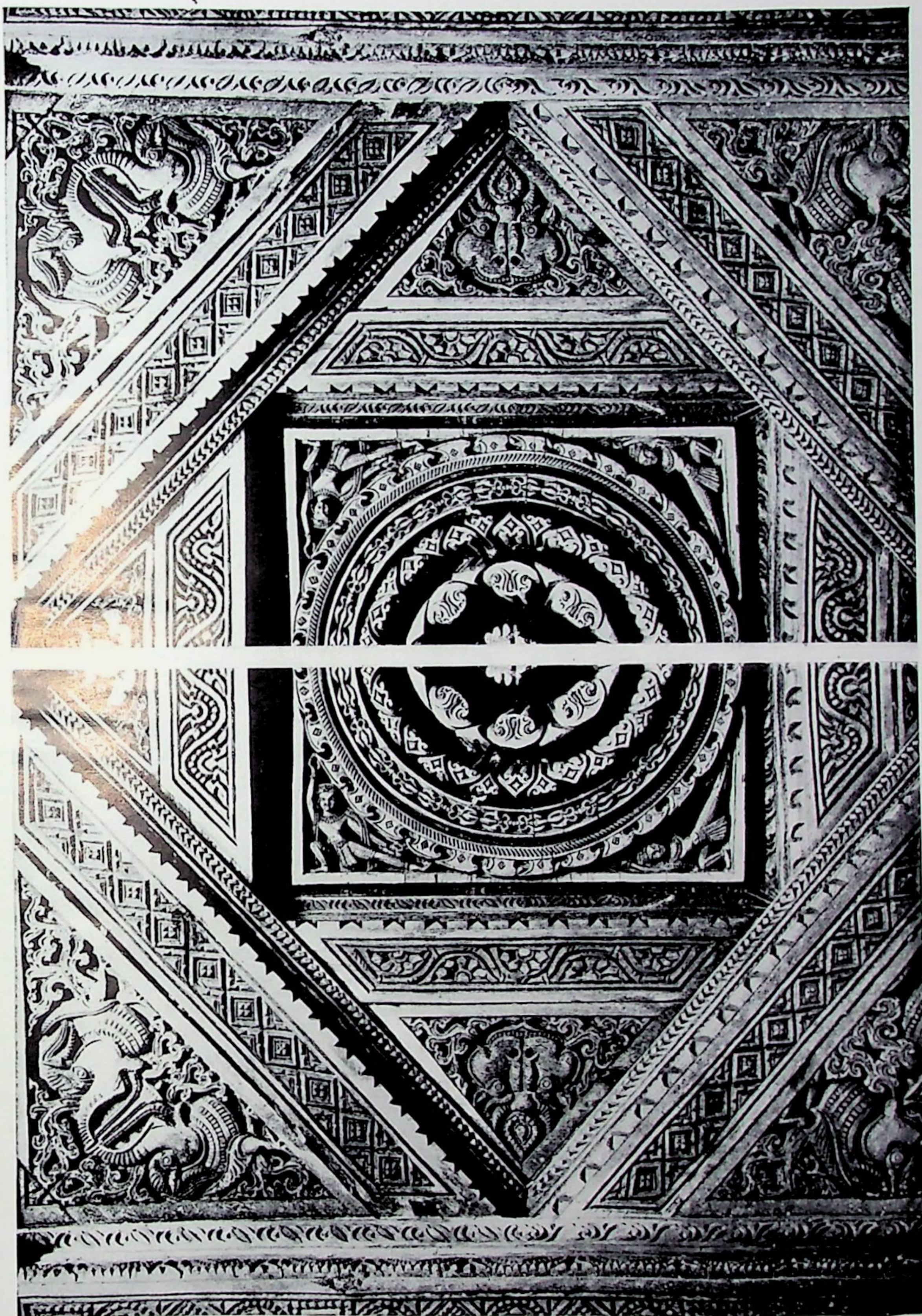
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UDAIPUR



FAÇADE OF INNER SHRINE OF MARKULĀ DEVĪ

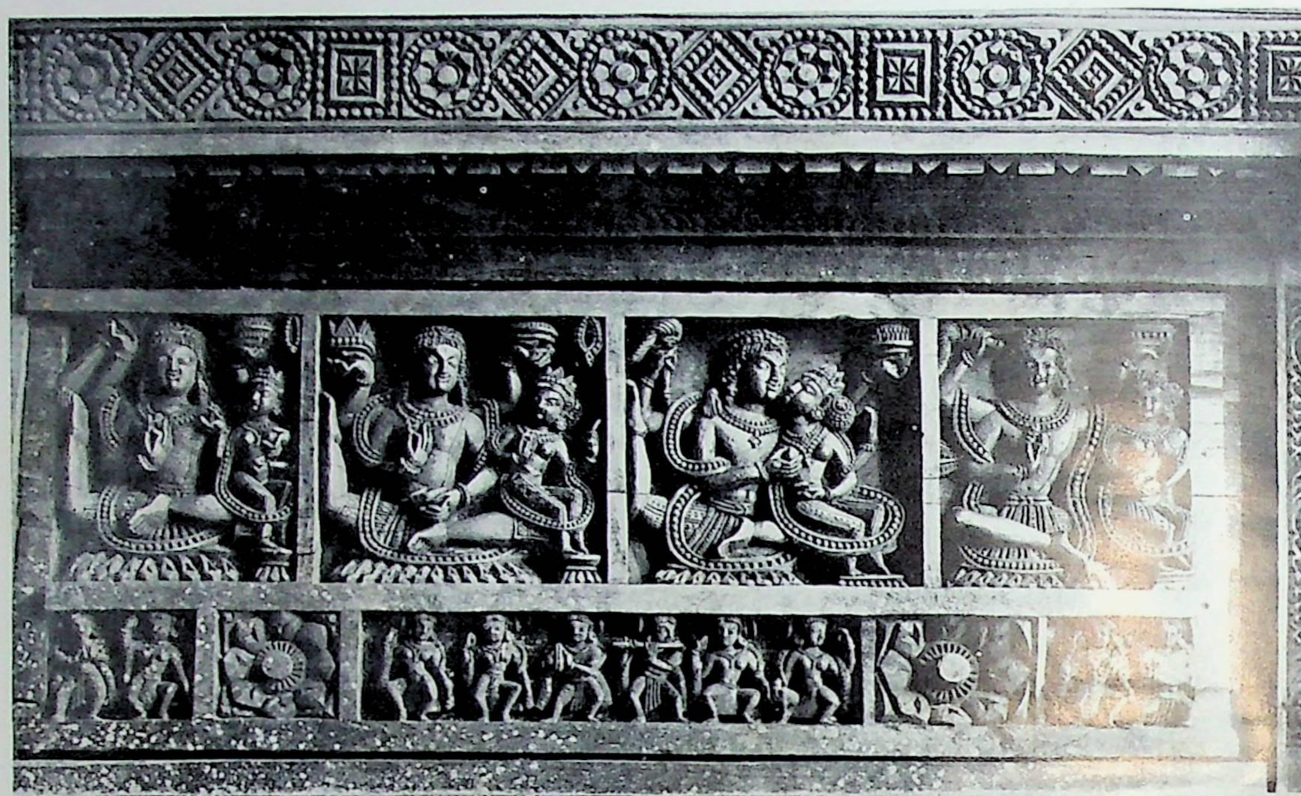
CC-0. Gurukul Kangri University Haridwar Collection. Digitized by S3 Foundation USA

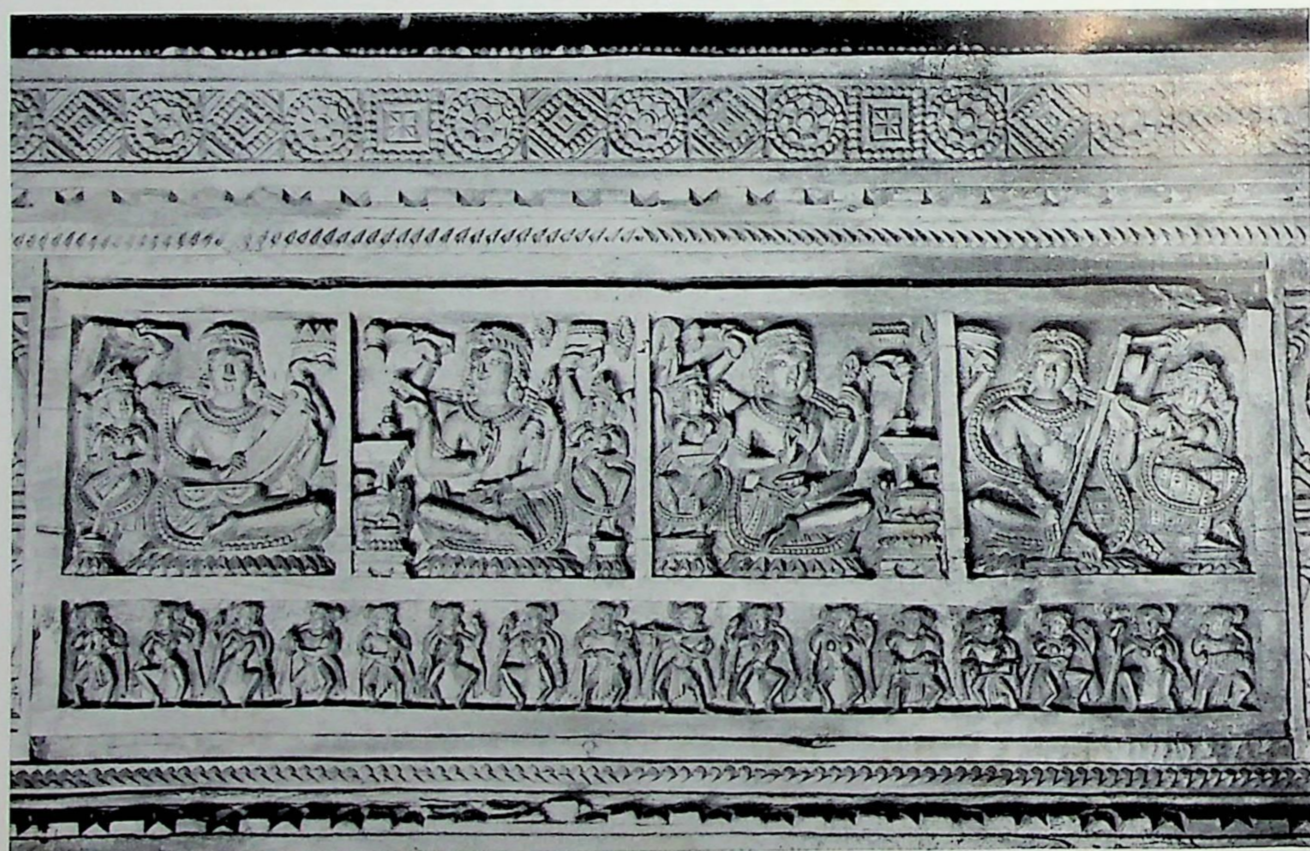


CENTRAL PANEL OF CEILING OF MAṆḌAPA

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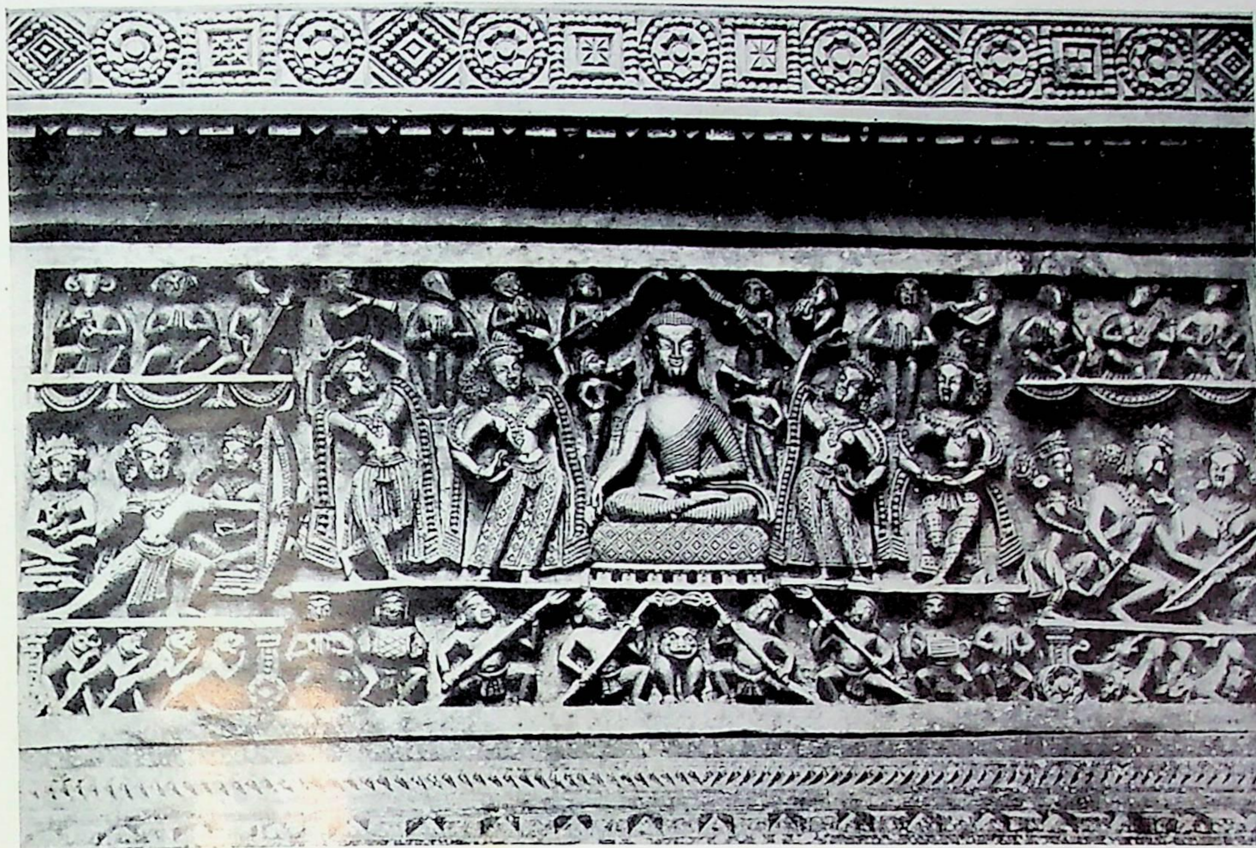


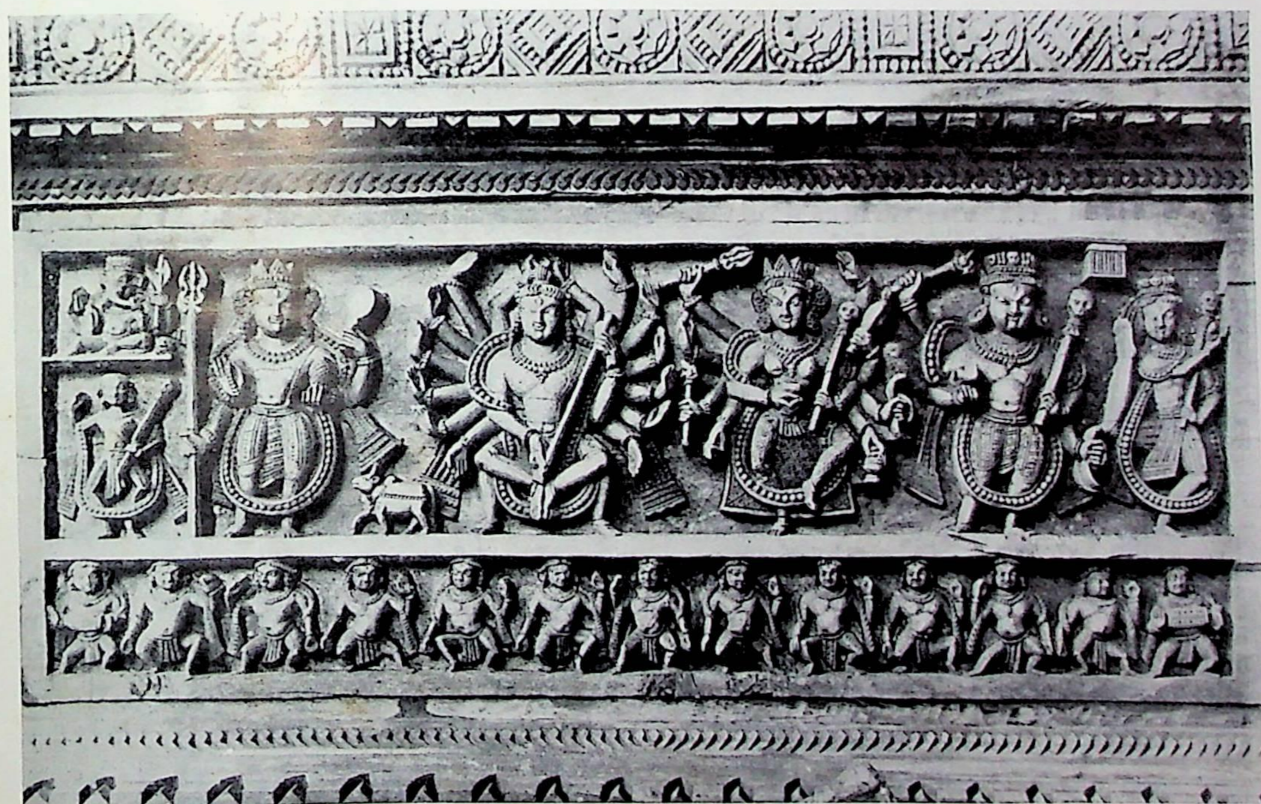


EAST AND SOUTH PANELS OF CEILING

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NORTH AND WEST PANELS OF CEILING

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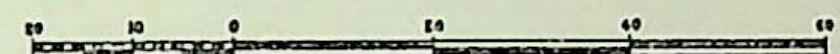
PANELS ON BOTH SIDES OF WINDOW

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MAP OF CHAMBA STATE AND SURROUNDING DISTRICTS

KUḶU	Hill State (extant or extinct) or District	
KULŪTA	" " or District (ancient name)	
TRĒHṬĀ	Hill tract	
TRIGHAṬṬAKA	" " (ancient name)	
BALOR	Capital (past or present) of Hill State or District	
VALLĀPURA	" (ancient name)	
Sôpūr	Town	
Suyyapura	" (ancient name)	
Kaṇhyārā	Village	
Kṛṣṇavihāra (?)	" (ancient name)	
Rāvī	River	
Irāvatī	" (ancient name)	
------------	Present boundary of Hill States	

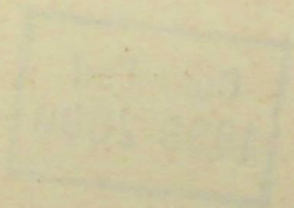


HAZĀRA
URAŚĀ
KHĀGĀN
Kṛṣṇā
Kiśan Gaṅgā
GARHI
MUZAFFARĀBĀD
KAŚMĪR
Vular
Mahāpadmasaras
Sôpūr
Suyyapura
Bārāmūla
Varāhamūla
Sind
Sindhu
Jehlam
Vitastā
ŚRĪNAGAR
ŚRĪNAGARA
KAŚMĪRA
Murree
PUNC
PARṆOTSA
LOHARIN
LOHARA
Vijabror
Vijayeśvara
Islāmābād
Anantanāga
Pir Pantsāl Pass
Rātan Pīr Pass
Shāhābād
Bānihāl Pass
Bāṇaśālā
RĀJAURI
RĀJAPURĪ
ZAṄSKAR
PĀDAR
KAṢṬAVĀR
KĀṢṬHAVĀṬA
RIĀSĪ
DURGAR
DURGARA
CANEHNI
BHADRAVĀH
BHADRAVAKĀŚA
PAṄGĪ
Cināb
Mindhal
Sāc Pass
Sāc
Candrabhāgā
AKHNŪR
JAMMŪ
BAU
Babōr
BABBAPURA
Rāmnagar
(BANDHRĀLTA)
RĀMKŌṬ
(MANKOṬ)
SUMAṆṬA
CURĀH
CATURĀHA
LAHUL
Mirkula
(Udaipur)
Trilōknāth
Lingtimbar
Kyelang
Sisu
Jehlam
Vitastā
GUJRĀT
SYĀL-KŌṬ
SĀGALA
SĀMBĀ
JASRŌṬA
BALOR
VALLĀPURA
BHADŪ
BASŌHLI
CAMBĀ
CAMPĀ
Rāvī
Irāvatī
BRAHMOR
BRAHMAPURA
BRAHMOR
BRAHMAPURA
Rotang Pass
Candrabhāgā
Cināb
LAKHANPUR
Mādhōpur
Mau
PAṬHĀN-KŌṬ
PRATIṢṬHĀNA (?)
NŪRPUR
KŌṬLĀ
Rihlu
Dharmsālā
Kaṇhyārā
Kṛṣṇavihāra (?)
TRĒHṬĀ
TRIGHAṬṬAKA
JAGAT SUKH
NAGAR
KULŪTA
KUḶU
Vipāśā
Biās
GUJRĀNVĀLĀ
Fatehpur
Palyūr
Pālampur
Pralamba
KĀṄGRA
SUSARMAPURA
Baijnāth
Kīragrāma
SULTĀNPUR
GURDĀSPUR
HARĪPUR
SĪBĀ
KĀṄGRA
Gōpīpur
Jvālāmukhī
Sujānpur
Bajaura
TRIGARTA
Nādaun
Hamīrpur
MAṆḌĪ
Mangtor
AMṚITSAR
LĀHŌR
Irāvatī
Rāvī
Biās
Vipāśā
JĀLANDHARA
HŌSHYĀRPUR
Kartārpur
JĀLANDHAR
SUKET
KŌṬLEHR
KAHLUR
BILĀSPUR
Satluj
Śutudrī

Bhwora Mull.

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पुस्तकालय
गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय हरिद्वार
726.14 G55E 56,394
पुस्तक वितरण की तिथि नीचे अंकित है।
इस तिथि सहित १५ वें दिन तक यह पुस्तक पुस्तकालय में वापिस आ जानी चाहिए। अन्यथा ५ नये पैसे प्रतिदिन के हिसाब से विलम्ब दण्ड लगेगा।

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पुस्तकालय, गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय,
हरिद्वार।

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